



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



THE
KINGDOM
AND THE
RESTORATION.

A white rectangular label with a barcode and the number 0091553T. The label is positioned in the top left corner of a dark, solid-colored background.

0091553T



THE KINGDOM AND THE RESTORATION;

OR,

A SCRIPTURAL VIEW

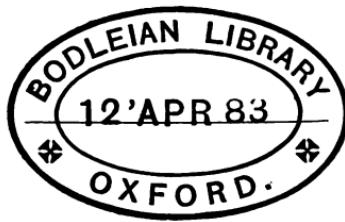
OF THE

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST,

WITH THE WONDERFUL SIGNS THAT WILL PRECEDE IT, AND THE
STILL MORE WONDERFUL THINGS THAT WILL FOLLOW IT.

BY

A STUDENT OF PROPHECY.



LONDON :
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.

—
1882.

101 L. 160

J. B. NIHILL, PRINTER, THREE TUNS PASSAGE,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.

P R E F A C E.

WE rejoice that during the last few years there has been quite an increased spirit of inquiry on the great subject of the second coming of Christ. Many Christians in the different sects of Christendom have been led to see the importance of prophetic study, and to avail themselves of various helps in the understanding of the word.

Deeply interested in the second advent ourselves, and desiring to awaken the attention of others to this subject, and aid them in forming a correct judgment, we send forth this work with the prayer that God may bless it and use it for the spread of the truth.

It is to be regretted that so many different views are advocated by different writers, as perplexity and doubt and discouragement are the result on some minds. This should, however, stimulate to greater diligence and earnestness in seeking the truth.

We cannot presume that in our treatment of the subject we have not fallen into any error ; but this much we can confidently say, that with no little prayer and study and labour we have honestly endeavoured to arrive at the truth, and we have endeavoured to do this irrespective of pre-conceived opinions of our own, or the opinions of other men. We want the truth with-

out any mixture of error ; the light without any shade of darkness.

The work, as will be seen, is very comprehensive, the subject of it is one of absorbing interest, as it is so closely related to the future destiny of the race ; and, therefore, we have striven hard and long to produce such a book as is needed by the state of the church, and is demanded by the times in which we live ; and we could wish that every christian would read it. We trust it will be found amply to repay a diligent and prayerful perusal. We trust it will be a help to those who *search* the prophetic word, and *think* for themselves, and desire, above all, to *know the truth*. It gives what is believed to be the true meaning of many difficult passages. By its exposition of numerous prophecies great light is thrown upon the significance of passing events. We pray that it may prove a beacon light to travellers in the darkness of this world's night.

One word more. The subject, in its various phases, as set forth in holy Scripture, is so complicated, and many of the events not being given in chronological order, but being mixed up somewhat by the sacred writers, it has been necessary, in order to understand the subject as fully as possible, to repeat here and there some of the thoughts, and refer several times to the same events. This could not be avoided, especially as it was sometimes necessary to refer to the same event, or to the same passage of Scripture, in different parts of the work, for different purposes.

July, 1882.

C O N T E N T S .

						PAGE
I.						
The Duty of Christians in respect to the Second Advent	...					9
II.						
The Study of Prophecy	...	...	...	...	...	13
III.						
How to understand Scripture	...	...	...	...	...	17
IV.						
The Apostacy which precedes Christ's Coming	...	...	...	...	...	20
V.						
Christ's Coming for His people ; or the Resurrection of the holy dead	...	...	...	...	...	43
VI.						
The Resurrection Body of Believers	...	...	...	...	...	49
VII.						
The Translation of the living saints	...	...	...	...	...	56
VIII.						
The Hour of Christ's Coming unknown	...	...	...	...	...	63
IX.						
Signs which show that the Coming of the Lord is near	...	...	...	...	...	65
X.						
Christ's Coming a motive to holiness and usefulness	...					74

	XI.		PAGE
Prophetic Descriptions of the Anti-christ		79
XII.			
The Papacy not the Anti-christ		116
XIII.			
The Great Harlot that sitteth upon many waters		122
XIV.			
The Design of the Anti-christ		131
XV.			
The Time of Trouble		133
XVI.			
The Two Witnesses		138
XVII.			
Escape of the Church from the unequalled time of tribulation			148
XVIII.			
The Doom of the Anti-christ and his allies		152
XIX.			
The terrible instruments of their destruction		155
XX.			
The Judgment of the sheep and the goats		160
XXI.			
An explanation of the Imprecatory Psalms		167
XXII.			
The seventy weeks of Daniel		171
XXIII.			
The one hundred and forty-four thousand sealed ones	...		183
XXIV.			
The Great Multitude		186
XXV.			
Events which shall mark the commencement of the Millennium			191

CONTENTS.

vii

xxvi.

The Establishment of the Kingdom, or Christ's reign over the earth PAGE 201

xxvii.

Christ's Coming to Reign, visible 216

XXVIII.

Prophetic Descriptions of His reign 223

XXIX.

Israel's final Redemption from their enemies, and Restoration to their own land 228

xxx.

Israel's Repentance 245

XXXI.

The effects of Israel's Restoration and Repentance 248

XXXII.

The Greatness and Glory of the nation of Israel 250

XXXIII.

Israel's knowledge of God saving and universal 255

XXXIV.

Obedience not universal among the Gentiles 257

www

The Planned effects of the Millennium Commission 253

XXXVI.

XXXVII.

XXXVIII.

The Belief of the Fathers and of the Early Christians concerning the Millennium.

XXXIX.

Testimony of men learned in ecclesiastical history to the belief of the Primitive church in the Millennium	PAGE
...	300

XL.

The views of several great men of later times	312
---	---------	-----

XLI.

The Conversion of the World before the Second Coming of Christ a modern notion	314
--	-----------------	-----

XLII.

No indication in the tendencies of the times that the present system of means will bring about the world's conversion	322
---	-----

XLIII.

Indications that the Millennium is at hand	335
--	-------------	-----

XLIV.

The manner in which the Millennium will be introduced	...	337
---	-----	-----

XLV.

Concluding Remarks	341
--------------------	---------------------	-----

ERRATA.

Page 264, line 6 from bottom, for "been the resurrection," read "be in the resurrection."

Page 280, line 11 from bottom, for "sees it in all parts," read "sees it in all its parts."

THE KINGDOM & THE RESTORATION.

I.

THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS IN RESPECT TO THE SECOND ADVENT.

THE subject we propose for examination in this essay is the second coming of Christ, the translation of the church, the judgments that will come upon the wicked, the Millennium, or the thousand years reign of Christ with His people, and the signs of its approach, together with some other questions of deep interest connected with it and growing out of it.

This is a subject to which very great prominence is given in Holy Scripture. Scarcely any doctrine is referred to more frequently, or set forth more prominently than the second coming of Christ. The New Testament contains two hundred and sixty chapters, and it is stated by D. T. Taylor, that in these chapters the Lord's coming is named three hundred and eighteen times. References to this great event, therefore, are more numerous than are the chapters of the Christian Scriptures. And these references are

generally very clear and very forcible. Not more clearly does the New Testament testify even of the death of Christ on the cross for the sins of the world than it testifies of His coming again: yet scarcely any doctrine is referred to less frequently, or set forth less prominently than this, in what are called orthodox books and sermons. In much of the teaching of the present day it occupies no part whatever. It is ignored. In some instances it is ridiculed.

Now is it right to pass by that in our preaching which the Holy Spirit has made so prominent in the Scriptures? Ought we to be afraid to look into prophecy lest we should discover truths which might conflict with preconceived notions? If we neglect the study of so large a portion of the word, can we claim to be Bible Christians? If events of startling magnitude are foretold, shall we not be the better prepared to meet them by giving serious attention to them beforehand? And if we neglect their consideration, may they not find us unprepared?

But how can we account for the apathy of such a large portion of the professing church in respect to the second advent? And how are we to account for actual opposition on the part of some? If they love Jesus while He is absent, one would think His presence would be an object of ardent desire. They object not to go to Him, but they seem not to want Him to come to them. Yet it is when He comes again that He says He will receive us to Himself. We fear that much of the opposition to the Lord's second coming arises from a secret consciousness of unpreparedness to meet Him. Many who are true Christians, and love Jesus with all their heart, have sat under erroneous teaching on this subject all their life. From youth upwards they have

seldom heard the visible and personal coming of Christ spoken of except to oppose it or ridicule it. Some of this class only need to have the truth set before them, to induce them to embrace it. Others may have been thereby biassed in their judgment. Thus life-long prejudice, the result of false instruction, has hid the precious truth from their eyes. "There are truths," says one, "which some men despise because they have not examined them, and which they will not examine because they despise them." But we trust this will not be so with you.

This apathy, this want of interest in the second advent, is the result of unbelief, and this unbelief is the result of false teaching and early prejudices. A great part of the professing church are yet unbelieving, and their unbelief seems settled, and it leads them to speak very lightly of the event; but the word of God will not fail because of their unbelief. However they may trifle, or sneer, or deride, the Lord *will* come, and He will come *soon*, and judgments will accompany Him. *Woe unto them that are not prepared.*

The unbelief of the church in Christ's return has done great mischief. It has hindered her progress. It has enfeebled her endeavours. It has introduced corruption into her doctrines. And it has rendered her evidences less bright and clear. Those who neglect to give due prominence to the doctrine of the second advent, are almost sure to neglect in some measure, another doctrine intimately connected with it, the doctrine of the resurrection.

It is certainly the duty of Christians—ministers and hearers, authors and readers—to give increased and more prayerful attention to this doctrine, and to realize more fully the preciousness of the second advent of the

Redeemer. It is not enough before our minds. It is not often enough upon our lips. As the great multitude of professors are so sceptical on this subject, and those who do believe that Christ's second coming will be a *personal* coming, are sometimes treated with contemptuous merriment, it would seem as if some believers in the doctrine were almost ashamed to give it due prominence.

Old and long cherished opinions to us are nothing, if they are not true. Let us have truth at whatever cost. We seek it, and we seek it sincerely, diligently, and earnestly. And when we find it, we prize it, and will suffer none to take it from us. If we had chosen to conform to a creed,—if we had promised to preach the popular doctrines,—if we had drifted with the multitude, we might now have occupied a much higher position in the church. But Heaven helping us, we will never sacrifice conscience ; we will never smother our convictions of truth ; we will never be guilty of treason against the Master. If honour comes of the preaching of the truth, we will give God the glory ; if reproach follows it, we will endure it for Christ's sake. We would rather please than offend those who listen to us ; but in order to please, we can neither deny the truth, nor preach half the truth. We are doubtless living in the last days of the Gospel dispensation, and it behoves us to give faithful warning to the church and the world of the speedy coming of Jesus.

There are not a few teachers and preachers of the present day to whom the following lines of the poet may be very appropriately addressed :—

“ Shame upon thee, craven spirit !
Is it manly, just, or brave,
If a truth have shone within thee,
To conceal the light it gave ?
Captive of the world's opinion—
Free to speak—but yet a slave.

All conviction should be valiant—
Tell thy truth—if truth it be,—
Never seek to stem its current ;—
Thoughts, like rivers, find the sea ;—
It will fit the widening circle
Of Eternal Verity.

Speak thy thought if thou believ'st it,
Let it jostle whom it may,
E'en although the foolish scorn it,
Or the obstinate gainsay.
Every seed that grows to-morrow,
Lies beneath a clod to-day.

If our sires, the noble-hearted,
Pioneers of things to come,
Had, like thee, been weak and timid,
Traitors to themselves, and dumb—
Where would be our present knowledge—
Where the hoped Millennium ? ”

II.

THE STUDY OF PROPHECY.

By the study of history we can see the things that have already transpired in the world ; by the study of prophecy

we may see the things which have yet to transpire. History throws its light on the ages that have gone by; prophecy throws its light on the ages to come.

Without the study of prophecy, we cannot have a right view of the coming kingdom, or the future glory of our Lord, and we slight the wisdom and love of God who has made known unto us these grand and glorious truths. It was not to give us an opportunity of speculating, or to awaken our curiosity, that these things have been foretold, but to enlighten our minds with regard to future events, and lead us to be in readiness for them, and become fitted for the kingdom of God. Christians suffer great loss by their passing by the prophetic part of God's word. They lose knowledge which would enrich the mind, truth which would affect the heart and guide the life.

Prophecy has a great moral and spiritual use. God has graciously shown us the end from the beginning that we may be warned of the things that are coming, and be prepared for them. Those who turn away from the prophetic word may see their mistake too late. Almost all prophecy has relation to the judgments of God which shall come upon the world in the day of the Lord, or just prior to, and at the commencement of, the day of the Lord; and in what condition will they be, therefore, who despise prophecy, who make no effort to understand it, and thus expose themselves to the coming woes?

In proportion as we learn what God has revealed about the future, and our minds become imbued with its importance, the ties will be loosened that bind us to the things of the present. And the more knowledge we gain of the things which shall be hereafter, the more will our minds

rest in the truth, and the stronger will be our faith, and the brighter our hope.

It must, however, be remembered that this is a subject more adapted for the study of believers than for the study of unbelievers. The wonderful things concerning the kingdom are not intended for the unconverted portion of the world, but for the believing portion. Men need to be quickened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit before they can understand and rightly interpret prophecy.

It is necessary to observe, for the sake of those not familiar with the form prophecy often takes, that both the past and the present tense are often used for the future. Thus Isaiah says, relating to Christ's first coming, 700 years before the events actually took place, "He *is* despised and rejected of men." "But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, He *was* bruised for our iniquities." The reason for adopting this method doubtless was, the Holy Spirit placed the wonderful events of the future so vividly before the minds of the prophets, that the whole seemed present and certain to them.

No greater mistake in reference to the prophecies respecting our Lord's second coming can be made than not to look for their literal fulfilment. The prophecies which tell us of the appearing of Jesus Christ in the flesh were literally fulfilled; and even little circumstances which were foretold in connection with His life and sufferings, were also fulfilled to the very letter. There is no reason then why we should not expect the literal accomplishment of the numerous prophecies respecting His appearing in the clouds, and also of the many circumstances connected therewith.

But some men never attempt the study of prophecy, believing it to be impossible ever to understand it; and others speak lightly of the subject, and treat those who give attention to it with derision. There are large portions of the Scriptures containing important prophecies,—prophecies which relate to the future of mankind,—and yet the generality of ministers do not even attempt to expound them. They sometimes quote them, but they almost always misapply them: and in this way unscriptural views are imbibed, and error is spread, and the plans and purposes of God are misunderstood. And ministers are, in a great measure, responsible for this. Instead of preaching their creed, and assuming that that contains all the truth, and that all outside of it, or that may be contrary to it, is heresy, they ought to study the word, eat it up, and digest it, and be able to bring out the truth. It is the Scriptures that are to be our guide to the truth, and not the creeds of a conference or a council. If we teach error instead of truth, and thus mislead others, it will not justify us at the last to say that we taught what was in the creed, and that the Church required us to adopt the creed as our standard of faith.

The apostle Peter, under divine inspiration, wrote these words: "And we have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost."—2 Pet. i. 19-21. Peter evidently considered the prophetic word, or the

written word of the Lord, a sure foundation upon which to build, yea, more sure, more safe than any vision could be. No inconsiderable portion of the Old Testament Scriptures is made up of prophecy, and if prophecy is not to be studied, then a large portion of the Bible must be passed over as useless. Besides, a blessing is pronounced upon those who give heed to the words of Scripture prophecy. In Rev. i. 3, it is said, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein."

At the same time it is true that never at any previous period, since the first four centuries, did the study of prophecy occupy so large a share of the attention of the Christian church. Thousands, we believe, are now pondering seriously the signs of the present times, and comparing them with what are to be the signs of Christ's coming, who a little while ago took no interest in the subject. There are now multitudes of sincere and thoughtful Christians who believe that the end of the age is near.

III.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE.

MAN's mind is limited, and with educational prejudices to begin with, and, in many cases, a fear of any departure from what is considered the orthodox creed, the truth is not discovered. And there is often a want of patient exam-

ination of the word, of comparing Scripture with Scripture, especially of comparing the earlier and partial revelations with the later and fuller revelations. There is nothing in the later revelations at variance with the former, but in some instances the former contain only glimpses of the truth ; and in not a few instances interpretations have been given of them which a careful study of the later and fuller revelations would have shown to be false. Divine revelation, as well as many other things, has been progressive. The whole truth was not revealed at once ; it was revealed by degrees.

In understanding Scripture, the greatest care is necessary in guarding against figures and spiritual meanings where no such things are intended by the writers. If the same liberty was taken with other books which is taken with the Bible, no language would be thought too strong to condemn the abuse. If the plain and sensible words of human authors were spiritualized as men spiritualize the simple words of the sacred writers, they might be made to mean anything that the foolishness of men might interpret them to mean. There is no book on earth which has suffered so much violence of this kind at the hands of its professed friends as this book.

By using Scripture words in a wrong sense, we lose sight of the meaning they were designed to teach. The true sense of the Holy Spirit is obscured, and, indeed, in some instances is lost ; and men's nonsense is put in its place. We have become familiar, from childhood, with certain forms of expression by which to convey certain Scriptural doctrines ; and those forms of expression have tended to mutilate or hide the truth. And we have some-

times put a figurative interpretation upon Scripture, instead of the plain, common sense interpretation which the words evidently bore. It was a saying of Dr. Doddridge, and the remark also became common with Dr. Dwight, that "common sense is the best interpreter of Scripture." There is certainly much truth in this remark, and hundreds of errors are fallen into, in explaining Scripture, for want of common sense. If we used our common sense more, and oftener understood the sacred writers to mean what they say, we should fall into fewer mistakes.

Speaking of the literal sense of Scripture, Dr. John Pye Smith declares it to be "the common rule of all rational interpretation, viz., the *sense* afforded by a cautious and critical examination of the terms of the passage, and an impartial construction of the whole sentence, according to the known usage of the language and the writer." Vitrunga, a learned author, says, "We must never depart from the *literal meaning* of the subject mentioned in its own appropriate name, if all or its principal attributes square with the subject of the prophecy—an unerring canon, and of great use." Bishop Jeremy Taylor says, "In all the interpretations of Scripture, the literal sense is to be presumed and chosen unless there be evident cause to the contrary." Hooker declares, "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that when a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst." And C. H. Spurgeon observes, "To set up canons of interpretation of the Book of God which would be absurd if applied to other writings, is egregious folly."

In searching the Scriptures, in studying the Word of

God, a love of the truth should be cherished. We should never take up the Book with a view to find Scripture proofs of some preconceived notion, but with an unprejudiced mind should be desirous of knowing what the Holy Spirit teaches, irrespective of any opinions of our own or other men's. And to arrive at the truth, it is necessary to understand, as far as possible, the sense which the sacred writers attached to the language they employed. While it is certain they sometimes used words in a secondary sense, or made use of figurative language, there is no doubt but that the language of Scripture generally is to be understood in its primary sense. To take heed to this in reading the word, and never to put a secondary or a figurative sense upon a passage, except when the text or the context requires it, is the most likely way to find the precious pearl of truth.

The prophecies which have hitherto been fulfilled have all been fulfilled literally, and there is no reason to believe that any unfulfilled prophecies will be fulfilled in any but a literal manner. A prophecy may indeed have some embellishments thrown around it by the use of figures, but of the prophecy itself we must look for a literal accomplishment.

IV.

THE APOSTACY WHICH PRECEDES CHRIST'S COMING.

BEFORE we treat of the Millennium, or the thousand years reign of Christ upon the earth, it will be necessary, in

order to make the subject clearly understood, to speak of several things which will precede it, and which will be the signs of its approach, as the great falling away from Christ, the general prevalence of unbelief, the resurrection of the pious dead, the translation of the living saints, the revelation of the Anti-christ, and the great tribulation. In this section we wish to treat of the apostacy. Whoever may live to witness the coming of Christ—the coming of Christ in judgment—will live in awful times. Crime, and sensuality, and lawlessness, and blasphemy will abound. The wickedness of the world will have reached a terrible height. The cup of iniquity will be full. The last state of the world will be the worst. Terrible scenes and mortal conflicts will be witnessed. Many are dreaming of peace and safety while sudden destruction is preparing to come upon them. The prophet Isaiah, referring to this wide spread apostacy, says, “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people.”—Chap. lx. 2.

The apostle Paul, after labouring successfully in Asia, called around him the elders of the Ephesian church prior to his going to Jerusalem. He reminded them how faithfully he had preached the truth to them, and exhorted them to give heed both to themselves and the flock over which the Holy Spirit had placed them : yet aware of the corruption and apostacy foretold by the prophetic Scriptures, and the Spirit moving him to speak, he says, “I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you not sparing the flock ; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”—Acts xx. 29, 30.

And very early in the history of the church corruption

began its work. In his epistle to the Romans, he says, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent."—Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

Quite a list of evils got in among the disciples at Corinth, which may be seen by reading his first epistle to them.

And in respect to the Galatian churches, their departure from the truth was still greater. Many of the disciples were deceived by false teachers. Such teachers have never ceased in the church, and all through the ages multitudes, to a greater or less extent, have been beguiled into error. But in the latter days error shall be more rampant.

We have a prophecy in Peter's second epistle, declaring that destructive heresies shall be brought in by false teachers, which shall be embraced by many. "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of."—2 Pet. ii. 1, 2. How this prediction has been verified already is well known even by those who have only a partial acquaintance with history.

At the period when Constantine received Christianity, there were great departures from the faith and simplicity

of the first disciples. Not only had heresies crept into the church, but real religion had declined. But onward from that period corruptions in doctrine and declensions in piety increased, so that at the end of the fourth century the clergy and the bishops had greatly degenerated, the latter gratifying their fleshly lusts, seeking power, and striving one with another for the supreme rule.

The apostacy is foretold by Paul in his first epistle to Timothy. "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth."—Chap. iv. 1—3. In these passages the Spirit of God teaches that in the last days there will be an awful departure from the faith as it is in Jesus; that this forsaking of the true faith will be in consequence of their listening to seducing spirits and misleading and deceptive instructions of demons, who, having their conscience seared as with a hot iron,—defiled, branded with guilt-spots,—will give utterance to abominable lies in a way the most specious, hypocritical, and deceitful. The seducing spirits, or false prophets who speak by the inspiration of seducing spirits, and these devils, or demons, will also prohibit marriage for the purpose of promoting licentious intercourse between the sexes; and will command abstinence from some kinds of meat with the intention of giving an appearance of piety to their general teaching. Much in these passages has been fulfilled, and is still being fulfilled, by

the Romish apostacy. The celibacy of the priesthood is a device of the devil, and is the source of a train of evils most dreadful in its nature, and from which flows untold miseries. The Romish priesthood as a body are, we fear, thoroughly unscrupulous, and hesitate not to employ any means they can to overturn every religious organization contrary to their own, and spread and establish the claims of the Papacy. They practise the most infamous cunning and trickery; they organize immorality, falsehood, and deceit. They conspire against the liberties of all; they aim to make slaves of all, to bring all to submit to the authority of the Pope. And in their eye, no measures are too vile or bad to employ to gain their end. They will deceive, or lie, or persecute, or imprison, or torture, or kill, where they have the power, or excite war between nation and nation to gain influence and dominion. We believe that no greater enemy to Christ, or to the spread of the sacred Scriptures, or to the spread of a pure faith, or to the liberties of the people, whether political or religious, has ever existed than the Pope. The Pope and his bishops and clergy, with fiendish craft and cunning and ingenuity and cruelty, have endeavoured to extinguish the light of the Bible, and destroy the truth and simplicity of Christianity, and put down the true church of the Saviour, or all believers who refused to acknowledge the authority of the Papacy. No church has been so unfaithful, so guilty of betraying her Lord, as the Romish church. No church, as she has done, has ever thirsted for the blood of those who differed from her creed. History verifies that this is true of the Romish church as of no other. No inquisition was ever established except by the Romish church. She has murdered, it has

been estimated, no fewer than fifty millions of persons for dissenting from her faith.

"It is impossible," says Macaulay, "to deny, that the polity of the Church of Rome, is *the very masterpiece of human wisdom*. In truth nothing but such a polity could, against such assaults, have borne up such doctrines. The experience of twelve hundred eventful years, the ingenuity and patient care of forty generations of statesmen, have improved that polity to such perfection, that *among the contrivances which have been devised for deceiving and oppressing mankind, it occupies the highest place*. The stronger our conviction that reason and Scripture were decidedly on the side of Protestantism, the greater is the reluctant admiration with which we regard *that system of tactics* against which reason and Scripture were employed in vain." He further says, "During the last three centuries to stunt the growth of the human mind has been the chief object of the Papacy. Throughout Christendom, whatever advance has been made in knowledge, in freedom, in wealth, and in the arts of life, has been made in spite of her, and has every where been in inverse proportion to her power."

Romanism is at once the marvel and the scandal of the world. In the Romish system the individual man is sacrificed to the church ; his secret conscience is surrendered to the will of the church. Romanism and the sacred Scriptures can never be harmonized ; many of the principles of the one are in eternal opposition to the principles of the other. Those who are true to Romanism are false to the Scriptures ; and those who are true to the Scriptures are sincere haters of Romanism. It is impossible to understand both, and yet cling to both. Surely in this system

we have an awful fulfilment of some of the prophecies.

But in speaking on this subject it is necessary to keep in mind the distinction between the two hundred millions enclosed within the folds of the Romish church, and the Pope, the Head of the church, or the Papacy, in which we include the bishops of Rome. The Popedom, or Papacy, are guilty of enormous sins and evils which cannot be charged on the great body of Roman Catholics, though they are guilty in a degree, as far as they countenance known sin, or act contrary to their light, or wilfully remain in ignorance.

In the days of the church's greatest degeneracy and darkness, and when the Papacy, possessing almost unlimited power, carried her persecutions to the greatest extent, there were doubtless some true Christians within her pale. There were no doubt many, indeed, who would see and deplore evils which they were powerless to remove. And to this hour the Romish church, we think, may contain many really good and pious people; but they are such as, through the circumstances of their birth, and education, and surroundings are blinded, and therefore deceived with regard to the true character of their church. Of those whose education and surroundings have given them more light, and who have had the means of comparing her teachings and her practices with the Scriptures, we cannot think nor speak so favourably. We would ourselves shrink from bearing their responsibility. They must be verily guilty in the sight of God.

But the Romish church is not the only church guilty of apostacy. It is true that no other church has apostatized as she has done. She has been the great leader in error

and falsehood and departure from God. She has sinned to a greater extent than any other church. She has been guilty of greater hypocrisy, greater blasphemy, greater idolatry, greater abominations, and greater persecutions. But other churches have followed in her steps, some to a greater, and others to a less, degree. In some the pure gospel is little understood. It is all but hidden, buried amid foolish and unmeaning forms, and acts of idolatry. Ignorance, and superstition, and priestcraft predominate till little is seen of Christianity.

Eastern travellers have testified of the corruption of those churches, which number millions of souls. And the mind fails to take in adequately the ninety millions more in the Greek church, where the worship of the true God is little understood, and the life and power of godliness is a thing scarcely known. How sad to reflect on such a state of things. What a spectacle for God and angels to look down upon. Of the myriads passing away every year how few, comparatively, die in the true faith. How few are prepared for the coming of the Lord. How few understand anything about His coming. As to the true light and the experimental knowledge of these things, the great multitude are little ahead of the heathen themselves.

And if we come nearer home, what a departure from the faith do we see in the Lutheran churches. See how the true life has waned. See how rationalism has spread. See what numbers who were once Christians are now infidels, or almost infidels. What would Luther and Melancthon and other great reformers think of the state of religion in the German churches, could they in spirit visit them for a season?

But what of the government church in our own country, professedly Protestant? It is one of the most lamentable signs of our times that England, after having been, in a great measure, freed from Popery by the reformation, should have been retrograding for many years past. The Established Church of the land is rapidly moving Rome-ward; tens of thousands of her members and hundreds on hundreds of her ministers are journeying towards the Papacy, the most blasphemous, the most idolatrous, the most murderous, the most enslaving, and the most abominable system that ever disgraced the earth under the name of religion. The clergy are eating Protestant bread, and wearing Protestant clothes, and are betraying Protestant principles. The *Tablet*, which is the leading Roman Catholic paper, says, "We consider Ritualism to be indirectly the most powerful propagandist for the Church of Rome which England has yet seen." And for years past some members of the several late governments,—men in high office and having great influence,—have gone in the same direction. And they have been doing all they can to get places of power filled with men of Popish principles, and to get large sums of the public money devoted to aid in the spread of those principles. Will God allow such a sin to go unpunished? Surely, without a speedy repentance and a return to Christian principles, England will share in the terrible plagues that will come upon Babylon the great.

"Whether the last days of old England have really come," says the Rev. J. C. (now Bishop) Ryle, "whether her political greatness is about to pass away,—whether her Protestant Church is about to have her candlestick removed,—whether in the coming crash of nations, Eng-

land is to perish like Amalek, or at length to be saved, and escape, 'so as by fire,'—all these are points which I dare not attempt to settle: *a very few years will* decide them. But I am sure there never was a time when it was more imperatively needful to summon believers to 'cease from man,' to stand on their watch-towers, and to build all their hopes on the second coming of the Lord. Happy is he who has learned to expect little from Parliaments or Convocations, from statesmen, or from bishops, and to look steadily for Christ's appearing! He is the man who will not be disappointed."

Multitudes are doubtless led into a fatal delusion by the numerous and imposing ceremonies as now practised in the English Church, which are almost as foolish and meaningless as those practised in the Romish Church. The way of salvation is all but hidden amidst the lumber of forms. Doubtless many are led into the belief that they are Christians by their zeal in holding and spreading the doctrines of ritualism. Regeneration as taught in the New Testament is lost sight of. Outward observances are valued more than inward devotion. Childish drapery, solemn processions, silly performances, and lighted candles take the place of trust in Jesus and the whole-hearted consecration of the spirit, soul, and body to the Lord.

A holy warfare against these clerical encroachments should be carried on unceasingly by the friends of pure Christianity. No unlawful weapons should be employed, but those which are lawful should be used with the utmost faithfulness and diligence. To look upon such a system of superstition with unconcern is a sin against God, and against the religion of Christ, and against Protestantism.

The abominable evil should be assailed with a mighty hand.

And if we come to the evangelical portion of the English Church, and to the various dissenting denominations, in which the true followers of Christ are mostly found, we nevertheless see much degeneracy and apostacy. We see the bad united with the good, the vile mixed up with the precious. The true church is in the professing church, but the professing church comprises many besides the true church. There are many professors of religion who are not possessors of religion. The professing church, as such, is degenerating; becoming richer in this world's goods and poorer in respect to the true riches; increasing in outward forms of religion, and decreasing in inward life; waxing stronger in intellectual vigour and waning in spiritual power. Between the church as it is, and as it ought to be, there is a wide, and an ever widening, gap.

In entertaining these views we do not stand alone. Many thoughtful and observant writers admit the same things. And they are admitted by many who do not hold our views of the Millennial reign of Christ. They are admitted by many who are looking for the Millennium prior to the Lord's coming. If space would allow, we could give a large number of extracts from writers of different creeds who endorse the views we have now given.

Mr. Goldwin Smith says, "A collapse of religious belief, of the most complete and tremendous kind, is apparently now at hand." A French writer, M. Reveilland, editor of a religious paper called *Le Signal*, says, "We are on the eve of a moral and spiritual crisis; the symptoms are everywhere. We may call it an *irreligious* crisis. Some are

affrighted as though entering on the latter times predicted by the Scriptures, when the Son of man, returning, will find no faith on the earth."

In "Zion's Herald" for December 25th, 1879, Bishop Peck, in the leading article, says, "That there is danger of a powerful general apostacy we dare not deny; and we ground this danger first in the loss of spirituality and the substitution of worldliness in its stead; and next in the surrender of the plain inspired doctrines of the fathers, for general license and irresponsible religious free-thinking."

"A long career of prosperity in the Protestant Churches of Christendom," says Dr. L. R. Dunn, "has given to them wealth, numbers, social position, civil power, and world-wide respectability. And in many instances these things have acted fearfully against them. Wealth has given rise to pride, luxury, fashion, worldly-mindedness, covetousness, love of forms and ceremonies; and these have, in some instances smothered, and in others eaten out, the very life of the Church. Many so-called Christian Churches are the very centres of fashion; in fact, they take delight in being known as "fashionable Churches." The assemblies which gather in them on the Sabbath present rather the appearance, of a "dress parade" than of companies of Christian worshippers. Mammon, fashion, lust, are worshipped by the thoughtless, giddy, flirting throng. The idea of a spiritual religion is scouted by the pulpit and the pew as the very essence of fanaticism and folly . . . I admit that the cases referred to above are exceptional, but that they exist none can doubt; and they are fearful, wicked caricatures of the religion of the Lord Jesus. But, I ask, is it not true that in very many of our Churches these worldly

influences are exerting their power? Has not this mania for dress, and fashion, and show, seized upon many of the people professing godliness? Are not vast sums, incalculable in their amount, annually expended for the gratification of this passion? Are not the mouths of many ministers closed upon this subject for fear of giving offence to their rich and fashionable members?"

The professing church, as a whole, is drifting towards the world. Its tendencies are towards worldly wealth, worldly respectability, worldly influence, and lukewarmness in piety. Its tendency is downward; it is getting on to a lower level. It is a bad sign when Christians are on good terms with the world. The spirit of the world is the same now as in the days of the apostles; it is as much opposed to the spirit of Christianity as it ever was; and when Christians seek friendship with the world, it evidences a departure from Christ. Some phases of life, now common in the church, are designated by a Protestant Episcopal Bishop, "Baptized worldliness." How necessary for Christians to watch that they be not beguiled into any evil. How needful to seek divine wisdom that they do not in any way sanction error, or lend their aid to anti-christian systems.

Again; the seven churches of Asia, of which particulars are given in Rev. ii. and iii., doubtless set forth the spiritual condition of the professing church as it has already existed, and will exist, from the time of the apostles to the end of the age.

Mede thinks they "were intended to be as patterns and types of the several ages of the catholic church . . . that so these seven churches should prophetically sample

unto us a sevenfold successive temper and condition of the whole visible church, according to the several ages thereof, answering to the pattern of the seven churches here. And if this be granted, viz., that they were intended to be so many patterns of so many states of the church, succeeding in the like order the churches are named, then surely the first church (viz., the Ephesian state) must be first, and the last be the last." We shall thus see that the last state of the professing church, as represented here, accords with other prophetical descriptions of that state.

The church at Ephesus, though it still maintained communion with God, had not continued to increase in love. Christ commended it for some things, and He blamed it for others.

The church in Smyrna suffered tribulation from unbelieving and blaspheming Jews. This may represent the persecutions which the Christians suffered under Pagan Rome, which, between the apostolic age and the reign of Constantine, were exceedingly great and cruel.

The church in Pergamum, while its minister had not denied the faith of Christ, had some in its fellowship who were guilty of fornication, lewdness, of indulging unlawful desires, and also probably of idolatry. They held the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. It is thought that the early fathers applied this epithet "to the gnostic heretics of their day, as the divinely appointed stigma for licentious lives." There was a worldly element in the religion of this church. Its members were actuated to a great extent by the principles of the world. This church therefore represents the professing church when it allied itself with the world under Constantine, and the evil influence resulting from such an alliance.

The church in Thyatira had allowed themselves to be led away by false teaching, which led them into lewd and vile practices, and darkened and corrupted their minds. This church sets forth the state of things as it existed in the dark ages, the period when corruption so widely prevailed, and when those Christians who were true to their Lord were bitterly hated, and were often obliged to flee to some secret place to escape the cruelty of their foes.

The church in Sardis had but little spiritual life. Its minister, or bishop, and a majority of its members, were dead while they tried to keep up their reputation as live Christians; they were dead in trespasses and sins. This church represents the condition of things in the church some time after the Protestant reformation. Many evil practices had been put away; some doctrines almost lost sight of had been brought to the front; there was better teaching, and there were purer forms of worship; but there was a great lack of spiritual life. Much of the new life that Luther, Melanthon, and their fellow workers had been the means of infusing into the church, had waned and died out.

The church in Philadelphia was probably a small church; their strength was little; but they had not corrupted the Gospel; they had honoured Christ and observed His word. The Philadelphian church then represents the true church, or the faithful in the professing church of the last days.

The church in Laodicea possessed the christian graces, but those graces were so feeble that they yielded but little fruit in their lives. They had them, and therefore it could not be said that they had them not; yet they had them in

such weakness that they could scarcely be said to possess them. The fire of their love, if once hot, had almost gone out; the heat was gone, and there was only enough of the fire to show that it was once burning. The church in Laodicea, therefore, pictures the last state of the professing church on earth.

This apostacy, great and wide-spread as it already is, will become still greater and more general as the end of the age gets nearer. Startling as this assertion may sound to those who have been taught that the world will be converted prior to the coming of Christ, there is no lack of Scriptural evidence of its truth.

In his second epistle to Timothy, the apostle gives a further description of the awful corruption and abominable iniquity of mankind in the last days, when that which is now a check to the working of the mystery of iniquity shall be removed. "But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof."

—Chap. iii. 1—5.

We will give a very brief exposition of these several words and phrases.

"For men shall be lovers of self." The sense of the apostle does not seem to be expressed by this term. We are not aware that men commit sin by loving themselves. It is when they love themselves so as to seek their own

good to the injury of their neighbour, that their love takes on itself a wrong type. The state of mind Paul represents is correctly set forth by the word *selfish*. In the last days men shall seek their own interests and disregard the interests of others. They shall love themselves in a degree that shall swallow up all affection for their neighbours. This is a sin of which too many from the first have been guilty; but in this last age it is to prevail to a great extent, as indeed we already see it.

Men are also to be "lovers of money," greedy of silver and gold. They will love it, not for the good they may do with it, but for the carnal gratification it will yield them.

They are also to be "boastful," seeking to exalt themselves, to push their way up to a prominent position and appear conspicuous. It seems to be a fulfilling of this, at least in one way, that the great multitude in Christendom have proclaimed their own natural immortality.

They are further characterized by the word "haughty." They will be proud, arrogant, esteeming themselves more highly than they ought.

In these last days men are to be "railers," using towards others reproachful and contemptuous language. They will care nothing for another's character or good name. Their common discourse will be disfigured and rendered mischievous with opprobrious and insulting words.

Another characteristic of sinners in the last days is disregard of parental authority. Men will be "disobedient to parents." Even that which is taught by the natural conscience as well as by the divine word, will be neglected, yea, treated with contempt.

To this is added ingratitude. They will be "unthankful." Even for common mercies God will receive no thanks; and for the greatest of all His gifts, that is, Jesus, with whom we have the priceless blessings of redemption and eternal life, there will not only be no gratitude, but the only return made will be to despise Him, and treat Him with scorn and contempt.

Another trait of character will be a total disregard of the claims of divine law upon the obedience of the heart and life. They will be "unholy." Their hearts corrupt, their wills stubborn, their spirits rebellious, there will be no hallowed feeling. All sacredness will have left them. What a picture. But the list of evil characteristics is yet considerable.

"Without natural affection." They will sin against the law of their being, the law of their higher nature, till natural kindness will become extinct. Every one grows up from infancy with a measure of natural affection, but in the last days men will quench it by acting contrary to nature. They will disregard the dictates of their consciences till their spirits become dead, or dormant,—dead or lulled to sleep in sin.

"Implacable." They will cherish enmity which will not be appeased. They will not be reconciled to those against whom they bear malice. Their enmity will be deep and constant.

"Slanderers." They will belie their kindred and their neighbours. Their tongues will be polluted with slander, false invective, and calumnious imputations. In this they will be of their father the devil; he is the great slanderer, the accuser of the brethren.

“Without self-control.” They will be destitute of chastity, having lost all proper government of themselves. They will be held in bondage by their own sinful lusts, will indulge themselves in forbidden pleasures, and despise any restraint of their appetites.

“Fierce.” They will be ferocious, or savage, will give way to violent and angry passions.

“No lovers of good.” From the day that goodness was first cherished and manifested, evil has treated it with scorn; but in the last days their scorn will put on a more malignant form.

“Traitors.” The trust reposed in them will be betrayed. They will be guilty of the most cruel perfidy and treachery. They will thereby not only disturb but break the peace of families, societies, and nations. They will make covenants and violate them. They will be treacherous, when it serves their selfish purpose, even to their friends.

“Headstrong.” By this is meant that they will act precipitately, rashly, hastily, without consideration, rushing forward without thought or care of the consequences. They will be unruly, turbulent, and ungovernable.

“Puffed up.” The idea conveyed by this word is that they will be arrogant in a great degree, swelled much with pride.

“Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.” They will make pleasure the end of their being. It may be sensual or carnal pleasure; it may be social pleasure; it may be intellectual pleasure,—the gratification arising from learning and knowledge; or it may be religious pleasure, by which we mean the gratification derived from the various exercises of public worship, particularly from

artistic singing and eloquent preaching ; but pleasure in one form or another, and not the glory of God, will be uppermost in their thoughts and the supreme end at which they will aim. And this making pleasure their god will plunge men into an awful state of moral degeneracy.

“Holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof.” Now what is very remarkable and very significant is, that this long list of evils, which is to prevail in the last days, is to be in association with a profession of religion. However faith may diminish, and love decline, and zeal grow cold, the form of religion will be kept up. And never perhaps was there more form than now. And as true religion wanes, forms and ceremonies may increase.

There is a very solemn passage in the 2nd epistle to the Thessalonians, which shows how awful the state of things will be at this period. “And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”—Chap. ii. 11, 12. They will reject the truth which is designed to save them ; and because they *will not* love the truth as it is in Jesus, but *hate* the truth and *love* the darkness, God will allow the working of error to go on in their minds unrestrained till they come to believe Satan’s lie, that they all might be condemned who, when the verities and blessings of the gospel dispensation are offered to them, accept them not, but take pleasure in evil doing.

The apostacy is also referred to in Matt. xxiv. 10-12: “And then shall many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. And many false

prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many shall wax cold." These verses show what the state of things will be when the Lord comes. Persons professing Christianity will persecute other professors, using political power, and giving them up into the hands of unjust judges. Lawlessness shall prevail. One of the greatest of commentators, Dr. John Peter Lange, explains this of the period just prior to His second coming. He says, "Apostacy from the internal spiritual laws of Christianity, or mental lawlessness, is iniquity itself. The dying out of true religion must be followed by the dying out of love among the many,—that is, the great majority of Christians. This dying out will be in its very nature gradual—a growing cold."

After speaking of God avenging His own elect, who cry unto Him day and night, Jesus adds, "Howbeit when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"—Luke xviii. 8. Now if the Millennium is prior to the Lord's coming again, as is commonly taught,—if the conversion of the world is to take place before His appearing, faith on the earth would be general. On such a supposition our Lord's question would be unnatural and out of place. Dr. Whedon says, "Our Lord here intimates that in a most solemn and important sense, *the faith of the Church will scarce hold out until His second coming*. She will all but faint in her prayer and watchfulness before that day." It has been attempted, very unnaturally, and contrary to the obvious meaning of the text, to explain this of Christ's first coming. But no ingenuity is capable of fastening such a meaning on these words. "There is not the least

ground," says Dr. Lange, "to understand here any other than the last coming of the Son of man."

What Christ says of the evil spirits, Matt. xii. 43-45, shows that Satan will have the world in his power when He comes in a fuller sense than at any previous period. "But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation," or the nation of the Jews.

"Christ himself," says Edward White, "describes the state of the earth at His second Advent, not as if it were the end of an age of righteousness, but the end of an age of apostacy, like "the days of Noah," *when but few expected Him*; thus indicating a general diffusion of erroneous prophetic opinion in the church, and a corresponding departure from God."

The apostacy foretold in these passages, and in others which we have not quoted, has, as we have shown, long ago commenced, and has become awfully great, and is now going on,—is still progressing. The current of evil is widening; wickedness is on the increase; the cup of iniquity is fast filling; and soon a fearful point of impiety and blasphemy will have been reached, beyond which God will not allow it to go.

But ere this apostacy has reached its height, and the Anti-christ is revealed, and the time of the great tribulation

has set in, the church, the true church of Christ, or the Lamb's bride, will be removed from the earth. And all who believe in Jesus during the present dispensation, whether Jews or Gentiles, constitute the true church, and will be received as the bride by the Bridegroom at His coming.

It was well the early christians did not foresee the long period of sin and crime and misery which was to ensue previous to the coming of Christ. It was no doubt in compassion towards them, to keep them from discouragement by seeing their hope so long deferred, that God hid it from them. They knew that Scripture had foretold the apostacy, but they did not know it would last through so many ages. Some of them, indeed, were evidently mistaken in the time of the Lord's return ; they thought He might come the second time while they were yet alive. Could they have foreseen that so many hundreds of years would have elapsed between their day and the day of the Lord's return, and that those ages would have been ages of increasing apostacy, they might have ceased to wait and to watch and to hope for His coming. They would have lost a powerful stimulus to hope. What is history now to us, was to them the uncertain future, and evidently God did not see fit to give them a full revelation of this matter ; the whole truth in this case would have been more than they could have borne. It was the design of the Holy Spirit to keep the Advent constantly before their minds, and by not revealing to them the time of the advent, to stimulate them—and the believers in every age—to constant waiting and looking for the Master's return. We may be reminded of Rev. xxii. 7, " Behold I come

quickly ;" but this means *quickly*, according to God's method of reckoning time, with whom one day is "as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

But we should not think so much of the apostacy, and hence of the great tribulation which will accompany it when it has reached its height, as of the resurrection and the rapture of the church. The Jews will be mostly concerned in the great tribulation ; we have to do with the translation of the church. If we maintain our living union with Christ, He will come and take us to the heavenly mansions ere the terrible time of trouble.

V.

CHRIST'S COMING FOR HIS PEOPLE ; OR THE RESURRECTION OF THE HOLY DEAD.

THE first great act in Christ's second coming will be, we think, not to subdue His enemies and at once establish His kingdom, but to gather unto Himself His people ; to raise to life those who are dead, and to transplant those who are alive. But wherever Christ's coming is associated with judgment and vengeance, such passages relate exclusively to the next great act of His coming, when He will be revealed "from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire," a while after His saints have been gathered into His presence. Respecting the resurrection of believers at the Lord's coming, Paul says, "But we

would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep ; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord."—1 Thess. iv. 13-17. Now this is generally called the first resurrection.

But plain as is this teaching in respect to the raising of the pious dead—the dead in Christ—while no mention is made of the wicked, there are some who maintain that both the righteous and the wicked will be raised at once. It may be well, therefore, briefly to consider the following passages, which will fully establish the view we have given :—

Luke xiv. 14 : "For thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just." This expression, "the resurrection of the just," implies that it will not take place simultaneously with the resurrection of the unjust. It seems to be thus designated by way of eminence and distinction. The expression is suggestive of the idea that the one is distinguished from the other by taking place at a different period. Olshausen and De Wette, of opposite creeds, concur in this exposition.

Luke xx. 34-36 : "And Jesus said unto them, The sons of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they that are accounted worthy to attain to that world, (or, age, as in the margin), and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: for neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." Now "the resurrection from the dead" mentioned here, must be the resurrection of the saints only: it cannot include the resurrection of the wicked for the following reasons,—1. This resurrection is spoken of as a thing which only they will attain to who are accounted worthy. 2. They who attain to this resurrection cannot die any more. This cannot include the wicked, for the wicked when raised will be raised for judgment and punishment,—the punishment of the second death. 3. They who attain to this resurrection are said to be equal unto the angels, and are the children of God. This positively excludes all who are not believers, and is conclusive evidence that the wicked will not be raised with the righteous.

Phil. iii. 11: "If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead." Now if the apostle had referred here to the resurrection of both good and bad, his language is altogether unsuitable. He knew there would be a general resurrection. Of this truth he was as certain as Christ's teaching and the Spirit's teaching could make him, and therefore there was no reason why he should set it before him as an object after which he was earnestly to seek. The resurrection he desired and longed for and sought after was evidently that, to have part in which is to be blessed. He looked forward to the resurrection of the saints at the coming of Jesus.

Against these views, however, and in favour of a simultaneous resurrection of the good and the bad, the following passage is quoted :—" Marvel not at this : for the hour cometh, in the which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment."—John v. 28, 29. The teaching in this passage cannot be contrary to the teaching in the passages we have just considered. There is perfect harmony between them, and the difficulty is only on the surface, which a very few words will make perfectly clear. By the word hour in this passage is meant, not sixty minutes of time, but a protracted period. In the 24th verse of this chapter Jesus declares that *he* is passed out of death into life, who *heareth* His word, and *believeth* the Father. Then in verse 25, He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God ; and they that hear shall live." The hour or time for Christ to raise dead souls to spiritual life was *then*, and that hour or time lasts as long as the gospel dispensation lasts. This is clear from the peculiarity of the phrase, "The hour cometh and *now is*."

Christ evidently uses the word hour to imply a very long duration. This hour has already lasted more than eighteen centuries. The passage promises spiritual life to those who give heed to the words of the Lord ; and that quickening has been going on from the time of Christ until now. But the coming hour, or period, of the resurrection was not then, and the words, *now is*, were not used in reference to that. This proves a contrast between the *two*

hours; they relate to different things. But if the first is a long period, so may the latter be. Indeed, the hour in verse 28 will embrace 1000 years, the period of the Millennium.

Another passage quoted to prove a simultaneous rising of the just and the unjust is Dan. xii. 2 : "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." It will be seen that our translation does not give the true sense of the original. Professor Bush translates the former clause of this passage thus: "And many from out of the sleepers in the dust of the earth shall awake." Now many *of* them, or many *from out* of the sleepers, cannot mean all. Gesenius, the learned lexicographer, asserts that the Hebrew word thus translated "designates a part taken out of the whole." And how can we suppose the word many, which is both in our own common translation, and in the improved translations, to refer to a part of the righteous and to a part of the wicked? Such an idea has no sanction from the Scriptures we have quoted. It is incongruous to suppose that if many arise, but not all,—tha if a part are taken out of the whole, the resurrection consists partly of the good and partly of the bad. It is far more consonant with the general teaching of Scripture to conclude that the many, or the part that are taken out o the whole, has a reference simply to the pious dead. And this thought is brought out clearly by other translations. Aben Ezra, renowned for his learning, translates the passage thus: "Those who awake shall be to everlasting life, and those who awake not shall be to shame and everlasting contempt." Tregelles, an accurate scholar, gives the fol-

lowing translation, which is also sanctioned by the learned Rabbi just named, Aben Ezra, and also by another, Saadia Haggion: "And many from among the sleepers of the dust of the earth shall awake, these (that awake) shall be unto everlasting life; but those (the rest of the sleepers who do not awake at this time) shall be unto shame and everlasting contempt." He also says, "The word which in our authorised version is twice rendered 'some,' is never repeated in any other passage in the Hebrew Bible, in the sense of taking up distributively any general class which had been previously mentioned; this is enough, I think, to warrant our applying its first occurrence to the whole of the many who awake, and the second to the mass of the sleepers, those who do not awake at this time." Correctly translated then there is nothing in Dan. xii. 2, opposed to the views we have maintained that the resurrection of believers shall be distinguished as to time from the resurrection of unbelievers.

Chrysostom says, "The just shall rise before the wicked, that they may be first in the resurrection, not only in dignity, but in time." Jeremy Taylor also believed that while the resurrection shall be universal, yet all shall not rise together.

The great truth of the resurrection is one in which every Christian should rejoice. Our joy should be exceeding great, unspeakably great. Then, and not till then, we shall be clothed with immortality. Then, and not till then, we shall be perfected or crowned.

The thought of the resurrection should inspire us with hope and courage. It should impart strength in our weakness, and fortitude in temptation, and meekness in provoc-

ation, and gladness in sorrow. If death conquers us for a while, it will only be for a *little* while, and then we shall get the victory, and shall be victors for ever. If we go down into the grave, we shall come up out of the grave, and we shall come out better than we went in. All that is corruptible and mortal we shall leave behind us, or rather, what is corruptible and mortal shall be changed into that which is incorruptible and immortal.

Hence believers look forward to their resurrection with *hope*; but alas, unbelievers look forward to their resurrection with *terror*. To the former, it will be the crowning to the latter, it will be the time for judgment and punishment.

Brethren, the shadows of evening are now upon us, but soon we shall have the dawn of morning, the beginning of a bright and glorious day. Sunshine will follow darkness; beauty will follow deformity; life in full vigour will follow death; and happiness unspeakable will follow unrest and disquietude.

VI.

THE RESURRECTION BODY OF BELIEVERS.

In his remarkable chapter on the resurrection, the apostle refers to the inquiry made by some, "With what body do they come?" This inquiry we will now answer.

The resurrection body of believers will doubtless be a *material* body. Christ's resurrection body was a material body, and their bodies will be like his. When Christ rose

from the dead, he had the same body which he had when he was laid in the tomb, saving that the Divine Spirit was then its life, and not blood. The marks it received from being nailed to the cross, and from the soldier's spear being thrust into his side, it still bore after his resurrection. This is fully proved by John xx. 24—28 :—“ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.”

That Christ's resurrection body was the same which was laid in the grave, is further evident from his own words as recorded in Luke xxiv. 39 : “ See my hands and my feet,” said He to His disciples, “ that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold me having.” It is clear from this that in its nature the resurrection body of the Saviour was material.

Christ, after He had risen from the dead, ate food, as is evident from the following passages :—“ And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here anything to eat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it, and did eat before them.” —Luke xxiv. 41—43. “ Jesus saith unto them, Come and

break your fast. And none of the disciples durst inquire of him, Who art thou ? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus cometh, and taketh the bread, and giveth them, and the fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after that he was risen from the dead."—John xxi. 12—14. "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God; even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead."—Acts x. 40, 41. It is then beyond question that Christ ate and drank after his resurrection, and therefore had a material body.

But if Christ, after his resurrection from the dead, had still flesh and bones, as He was seen to have, shall not we also, after our resurrection from the dead, have bodies of flesh and bones,—real, material bodies?

Will not the resurrection body of believers be like unto Christ's? Is there any evidence that it will be essentially different? If Christ's was material, will not ours be material also? It is true the apostle says, "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body."—1 Cor. xv. 44. But it is the opinion of Greek scholars that the term natural fails to give the true idea of the apostle's meaning. That idea is conveyed more correctly by the term *animal*. "There is an animal body, and there is a spiritual body." Our present body is a natural body, produced by natural generation, or an animal body, corrupt, subject to decay and death; the spiritual body will be spiritual because produced by the Almighty power of the Holy Spirit, and because it will be fitted to be the everlasting tabernacle of

the blood-washed soul and spirit ; and because it will be perfectly free from animalism, or corruption ; but this is no proof that it will not be material.

But against this view the words of Paul are urged, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.”—1 Cor. xv. 50. By this phrase, however, is doubtless meant that men, as they are now depraved by sin, cannot thus become inheritors of the kingdom. The carnal, unregenerate man lives after the flesh, and in that state he will be excluded from the kingdom of God. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh. And they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”—Rom. viii. 5, 8.

Job evidently believed that his resurrection body would be a material body. “I know,” says he, “that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though after my skin worms destroy this body, *yet in my flesh shall I see God* : whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.”—Job xix. 25—27.

The resurrection body will be stronger or more powerful than the body in the present state. This is proved by the words, “It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.” Believers in their resurrection state will not be subject to weariness. They will never be exhausted and require rest in sleep, as they do now. The resurrection body, being incorruptible, will be ever vigorous : old age will never cause any infirmity ; indeed, old age, as we understand it and view it, will not exist. That which is immortal cannot become old, but will be always young and new.

The resurrection body will no doubt be able to move

through space with remarkable velocity. We shall not be bounded by the limitations of our present fleshly condition. Distance will be as nothing to us, and we shall be able to move through space with wonderful rapidity. Nor shall we be subject to the law of gravitation ; we may take our flight upwards and come down again as need may be. And with a spiritual vision we may see through a stone wall as easily as we now see through glass. Darkness will have disappeared for ever, and every where it will be light to us. Christ, in His spiritual body, could appear, the doors being shut. We may not be able to explain these things, but the Lord has given us a simple faith, so that we believe some things we cannot explain.

The resurrection body will be a bright shining body. This is clear from Dan. xii. 2, 3, where speaking of many awaking to everlasting life who sleep in the dust of the earth, he says, “And they that be wise shall *shine as the brightness of the firmament*: and they that turn many to righteousness *as the stars for ever and ever.*” It is further evident from Matt. xiii. 4, 3 : “Then shall the righteous *shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.*” There is not the least doubt but these passages will receive a literal fulfilment. The same term, “shine as the sun,” is used to set forth the brightness of the Saviour’s countenance when he was transfigured on the Mount. “And he was transfigured before them, and his face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light.”—Matt. xvii. 2. Luke uses another expression. He says, “And as He was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and dazzling.”—Luke ix. 29. And in their resurrection state, believers

will resemble Jesus. Their bodies will be fashioned like unto His. "Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation," says Paul, "that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself."—Phil. iii. 21.

But some believers will shine with greater splendour than others, because their moral light here has been greater. Paul says, "One star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."—1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. We cannot suppose that Mary Magdalene will have as glorious a reward as the apostle John; or that a convict who obtains mercy in his prison cell before sentence of death is executed upon him, will have as great a reward as Fletcher or Wesley.

And it is at the resurrection that we shall see Jesus, and we shall see him, as the apostle says, *as He is*; that is, in His resurrected and glorified humanity, perfected, crowned. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is."—1 John iii. 2. Not as He *was*, observe, when persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, when His goodness provoked hatred, when His conferring benefits on men and by His word or touch causing their diseases to depart was made the occasion of charging Him with acting under satanic influence, when a violent mob treated Him with contumely and scorn and abuse, when He was tried before Pilate's bar and condemned to death, and when He was crucified amid those who mocked Him in His sufferings. We shall see Him, not as He was when, having

laid aside His glory, and took upon Himself humanity, He shed His blood as a propitiation for the world's sin ; but as He is, now that He has conquered death, and has received regal authority and power and glory from the Father. We shall see Him even as He is, surrounded by myriads of worshipping and adoring angels. We shall see Him in His majesty, in His excellence, in His spotlessness, in His beauty, in His loveliness, in His splendour. Oh, the joy of that day when it bursts upon the believing, waiting, watching church ! Until that day there will be no crowning of the saints. Until then, no sitting round about the throne, arrayed in white garments.

And brethren, nothing but the seeing of Jesus even as He is, will satisfy us. To see the angels, those holy spirits resplendent with beauty who existed before the first human pair were created, will be a grand sight ; but it would not satisfy without a sight of Jesus. To see loved ones who have gone before us,—to see them on the resurrection morn clothed with immortality,—to recognize them and have fellowship with them, will be sweet, and joyous, and delightful ; but it would not satisfy the heart's longings without a sight of our glorious Redeemer. Nothing on the Millennial earth, nothing on the new earth, nothing in the new heavens, nothing in the holy city would give full satisfaction in the absence of Him who is our High Priest, our Saviour, our Prophet, our Advocate, our Chief Shepherd, our Head, our King.

What is the honour of being permitted to have an audience with an earthly king, compared with being permitted to have converse and fellowship with the heavenly King, nay, with being permitted to share in His reign and

His glory? And what are kings' courts compared with the court of the King of kings? What is the splendour of their most splendid palaces compared with the splendour of His? The one is as nothing compared with the other. Indeed comparison here seems out of place. There is nothing to which we can properly liken these things. They are far beyond and above all that we know or ever heard of.

VII.

THE TRANSLATION OF THE LIVING SAINTS.

After the dead in Christ are raised, the living in Christ shall be called up into the air to meet them, and shall undergo a change equal to the resurrection. Oh, what a wonderful meeting that will be! It will be the beginning of eternal glory and blessedness, the grand crowning day, the day in which all their hopes will be fully realized. Hence they will not be in the scenes of the last dreadful persecution, and the awful judgments that will follow. The Church will be caught up into the heavenly mansions. Referring to the end of the age, and the unparalleled time of tribulation, and also to the signs which shall precede His coming in a cloud, He says, "But when these things *begin* to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh."—Luke xxi. 28. And after cautioning His followers against those things which would hinder their being ready for His coming, He

says, “ But watch ye, at every season, making supplication, that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man,” Ver. 36. The plain inference from this is, that those who shall be accounted worthy to escape, shall not pass through the great tribulation, but shall be called up into His presence before the reign and persecution of the Lawless One.

The coming of Christ for His people will be *sudden*. It will be as sudden as the lightning’s flash. “ For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west; so shall be the coming of the Son of man.”—Matt. xxiv. 27. It will be in an instant that the dead will be raised. The same almighty Being who by His word called sun and moon and stars into existence, will, by His word, call the pious dead from their graves. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.”—1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. The apostle here did not refer simply to himself and his fellow apostles and disciples, but to the believers in Jesus to the end of the age. And the translation of the living saints may be as sudden. Even to those who are quite ready—and none else of course will be translated—and are daily looking for Him, it may be, in a measure, at the moment it occurs, unlooked for. He will come in the night. In His noted parable of the wise and the foolish virgins, He says, “ But at midnight there is a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom ! Come ye forth to meet Him.”—Matt. xxv. 6. Now by the term *midnight*, we are bound to understand what it primarily and naturally implies, since there is nothing to lead us to conclude that the expression is figurative.

Christ’s coming will also be attended with great glory

and splendour and triumph. All earthly pomp and lustre is as nothing compared to the dignity, grandeur, and brightness of His appearing. This is evident from the words of the apostle already cited that He "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," as well as from other portions of the word.

The judgment of believers, or the judgment of their works, will take place at the Lord's coming. "Wherefore," says the apostle Paul, "judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall each man have his praise from God."—1 Cor. iv. 5. In this judgment, which will be preceded by the resurrection of the righteous, only believers will participate; for it is said, "then shall each man have his praise from God," a statement which could in no sense apply to the wicked.

Just here we would correct what we believe to be a great error, very generally held, that of regarding risen believers as being raised for judgment. This error has doubtless grown out of another error, that of regarding the representation of the sheep on the right hand of the Judge and the goats on the left, as a representation of the general and final judgment. William Trotter, than whom few have given more close and careful attention to this subject, sets this matter we think in a very clear light, in his very excellent work entitled "Plain Papers on Prophetic Subjects." He says, "While there are many passages which affirm the judgment to be universal, there are others which unequivocally testify that in *one sense*—that of being called in

question as to eternal life or eternal death—believers have already passed through judgment in the person of Christ, and that in *this sense* no judgment remains for them. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, *and shall not come into judgment* (see Greek;) but is passed from death unto life.”—John v. 24. Accordingly, in the context of this passage, our Lord divides the resurrection itself into “the resurrection of life” and “the resurrection of judgment” (see Greek.) There are those who will rise to be judged; and there are others who will rise by virtue of a life which places them beyond the reach of judgment as to life or death. Evidently the *possessor of everlasting life* needs not to be judged, and cannot be, as to whether everlasting life is to be his or not. Heb. ix. 27, 28, gives expression to the same truth. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” Men, as such, in their natural state of sin and condemnation, have before them death and judgment. The believer has death and judgment behind him, substitutionally borne by Christ on the cross, and he has before him as his blessed hope, the second appearing of Christ for whom he looks,—his appearing without sin unto salvation. Believers are, as to their persons, accepted in Christ; their security therefore can no more be called in question than that of Him in whom they are accepted. Fourthly, the works of believers must all nevertheless be brought into judgment. 1 Cor. iii. shows us that there will be those who, because building on the one

only foundation, will themselves be saved, whose works will, as unable to bear the test of the fire of that day, be burned up. Beyond question, we must, in this sense, "all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." But, finally, the way in which believers are placed before that judgment seat, demonstrates more than anything besides, that they are not there to be tried for life or death. How is it that the saints reach that solemn tribunal? *By being changed or raised at the very moment of Christ's descent, and by being caught up to meet him in the air.* . . . All must agree that the very first—the immediate effect of his coming, is the resurrection, the change, and the translation into the air, of his own people. It is thus, and only thus, that they are placed before the judgment seat of Christ. And shall they appear there in bodies fashioned and made like unto Christ's own glorious body, to have the question tried whether they savingly belong to Christ? Impossible! Nay more, where Christ is represented as being manifested, or as coming in judgment on the wicked, his saints are represented as coming with him: "When Christ, who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all." Are these saints, who thus accompany the Lord, to take their place among those on whom the judgment is to be executed, and only be afresh separated from among them, as the result of a judicial process? Incomprehensible as is such a thought, this, and much worse than this, is necessarily involved in the doctrine of a simultaneous judgment on all mankind, from Adam downwards, immediately to ensue on the coming of Christ."

The judgment of Rev. xx. is the judgment of the wicked dead; and the condemnation mentioned in John v. 24, in King James' translation, is evidently the same. It has long been admitted by scholars that this word means judgment, and in the revised version it is so rendered. In the 29th verse, in the former, it is rendered damnation; in the latter, it is rendered, as in verse 24, judgment. Into this judgment believers shall not come.

Christ then will come in the clouds as the Bridegroom to receive His Bride, before He comes to the earth as the Avenger to take vengeance on the wicked. On this point we can speak with the greatest certainty, because it is a point on which Holy Scripture is very clear and express. Zechariah says, "And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."—Zech. xiv. 5. And Jude says, quoting Enoch's prophecy, "Behold, the Lord came with ten thousand of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their works of ungodliness which they have ungodly wrought, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."—Verses 14, 15. Now it requires no reasoning to show that if the Lord brings all His saints with Him, they must first be gathered into His presence. The church, therefore, will be caught up into the air, to meet the Lord, before He comes in vengeance to subdue His enemies.

We have further proof of this in the Revelation of John the divine. The church in Philadelphia, referred to in chapter iii., doubtless symbolizes the faithful of the latter day. To them the Lord gave this promise, "Because thou didst keep the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon

the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Verse 10. This promise will doubtless be fulfilled to the faithful before the terrible judgments of the day of the Lord, alluded to here under the term, "the hour of trial," will take place. The true church, or the faithful ones, will be removed. The Lord will keep them from that dreadful hour.

John tells us that He was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind Him a great voice; and when he turned he saw very wonderful things, and was commanded to write them in a book. Now we want you to observe that chapter i., gives an account of these things. "Write therefore the things which thou sawest." Chapters ii. and iii., give an account of "the things which are"; and chapter iv., of "the things which shall come to pass hereafter"; that is, after these things. Now the things which are to transpire hereafter—after those related in the second and third chapters—John was called up to heaven to see and hear. "After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, Come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter."—Chap. iv. 1. From the first verse of the fourth chapter to the fourteenth verse of the nineteenth chapter, the church are not seen except in heaven. Most of the chapters between these are occupied chiefly with the revelation of judgments which come upon the Lord's enemies. But when these judgments fall upon the wicked, the church are absent. In the wonderful visions of John, He only sees them before the throne of God clothed in garments of white, with golden crowns on their



heads. In the awful hour of temptation, therefore, true believers will be with their Lord. While the devil is permitted to go about in great wrath, and the Anti-christ and the false prophet are persecuting many to death, and judgments are overtaking men for their sins, the church, the redeemed, the blood-washed are with Christ, saved and preserved from that time of trouble. Nor will they be seen on, or over, the earth till they come as the Lord's attendants when He comes in vengeance to destroy the man of sin, and bind Satan, and take possession of the kingdom of the world.

VIII.

THE HOUR OF CHRIST'S COMING UNKNOWN.

SOME have said that the apostles expected the return of Christ in their day. Evidently such a statement is founded on a misunderstanding of our Lord's teaching. It is true Paul said, after speaking of the pious dead being raised, "We that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord;" but by the word *we*, he meant those of the body of believers who should be living on the earth at the time of that event. He uttered these words on behalf of the church, of which he was a member. He calculated that he would himself pass through death; for he said, "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come." It is true also that Peter said, "The end of all

things is at hand ; " but by that phrase we are not to understand that he looked for the end in his own day. He knew that Christ would not return while he was alive ! for he says, " I think it right as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance ; knowing that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yea, I will give diligence that at every time ye may be able after my decease to call these things to remembrance." —2 Pet. i. 13-15.

There are some passages referring to the second advent of Christ, which involve the hour of His coming in perfect uncertainty, such as the following :— " Therefore be ye also ready, for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh." —Matt. xxiv. 44. " But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray : for ye know not when the time is. It is as when a man, sojourning in another country, having left his house, and given authority to his servants, to each one his work, commanded also the porter to watch. Watch therefore : for ye know not when the Lord of the house cometh, whether at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrowing, or in the morning ; lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." —Mark xiii. 32-37. " But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare : for so it shall come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may pre-

vail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."—Luke xxi. 34-36.

IX.

SIGNS WHICH SHOW THAT THE COMING OF THE LORD IS NEAR.

BUT there are other passages which refer to certain signs by which we are to know that the coming of Christ is near, such as the following:—"Now from the figtree learn her parable: when her branch is now become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors."—Matt. xxiv. 32, 33. "And there shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when *these things begin to come to pass*, look up, and lift up your heads; because your redemption draweth nigh."—Luke xxi. 25-28. "Let no man beguile you in any wise: for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."—2 Thess. ii. 3. Now these two classes of passages, apparently opposite, must refer to different stages of the Lord's coming, and therefore are

perfectly consistent. The first class evidently refer to His coming as the Bridegroom, which will be sudden, and at the moment of His coming, unlooked for; the second class plainly refer to His coming as the Avenger, which will be preceded by the appearing of the Anti-christ and the great tribulation, which is to last for a given period, and which will be a sign that Christ's descent to the earth is at hand.

We have then, according to these passages, a sign that the end is approaching, in the wide-spread apostacy to which we have already referred at some length, the prevalence of infidelity, and the terrible increase of crime. Among those who profess Christianity, we have to count millions of Roman Catholics, whose doctrines and forms of worship are such an awful mixture of the true and the false, the good and the bad. And the Greek church is perhaps almost as destitute of spiritual life and real religion. And among those churches which have a truer form of doctrine, and a more simple form of worship, we see a sad degeneracy. We see it in the pulpit, and we see it in the pew. Multitudes of professors no longer want sermons full of gospel truth, applied to the heart and the life, with reasonings and appeals and exhortations in favour of a whole-souled obedience to God. They would rather have sermons well spiced with incidents and illustrations that will amuse the fancy, and not disturb the conscience; and many ministers are trying to satisfy that vitiated taste.

The spirit of indifference which has sprung up in the church is evidently contagious; it is spreading, and many christians are slumbering. This is one of the devil's last great efforts with the church. He is getting christians

off their watch tower. They are called and sent to bear a solemn message to the world, and Satan is doing all he can to hinder them.

Another sign of the approaching end is the fulfilment of the foregoing prophecy, which foretells of the distress of nations and the quaking of men's hearts for fear. "This is an age of the world," says Mrs. H. B. Stowe, "when nations are trembling and convulsed. A mighty influence is abroad, surging and heaving the world as with an earthquake." At no previous period has there been such widespread dissatisfaction with existing governments. No government is exempt. There is discontent, commotion, agitation, distraction of mind everywhere. Men of learning and wisdom and experience, and well skilled in political economy, are struck with astonishment, and know not how to act for the best. The wisest statesmen are at their wits' end in trying to solve the difficulty. The foundations of civil society are moving, heaving; thrones are shaking; kingdoms are reeling. Excitement—terrible excitement—is prevailing, more or less, almost every where, and men are wondering what is coming on the earth. The wisest and most far-seeing men are perplexed. Christ's words are being fulfilled in the present widespread agitation: "Men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming on the world."—Luke xxi. 26. The late Lord Beaconsfield, in a speech delivered on the 2nd of July, 1874, said, "The great crisis of the world is nearer than some suppose." A tremendous tempest seems to be about to burst upon the world. Events seem to be impending, which when they take place, may startle the world by their magnitude.

Some of the nations on the continent are still in a ferment. None can foresee the exact shape things will take. The powers of evil are rallying as if for a tremendous, yea, a final battle. The war in the East which made such terrible ravages has not yet issued in a permanent peace. God has a controversy with the nations. The gloom gathers and spreads and thickens ; but the believer can see gleams of light emerging from the darkness. It seems to point to a speedy deliverance for the Lord's people, to a blessed consummation of their hope. The Millennial period is quite distinct from "the times of the Gentiles," and the commencement of that era cannot be very far distant, as there are signs of the present dispensation drawing near to its close. The political difficulties of European nations will never be settled till Jesus puts an end to them, and peace will never be restored, permanently, till He takes the reins of government into His own hands.

Another sign of the coming end may be seen in the lively interest that of late has been awakened in the study of prophecy, and the earnest desire among the Lord's people to inquire into this matter, and know what is foretold. This very thing was clearly predicted in the prophecies of Daniel. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end : many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."—Dan. xii. 4. The meaning of this is that many shall manifest unusual diligence in efforts to gain a knowledge of the things that shall take place in the end of the age. While we lament that there are a vast number both of ministers and professing christians who refuse to give their attention to this subject, we cannot but rejoice that the spirit of inquiry is

spreading, and that the result is a large increase of spiritual illumination, and the proclamation of the Lord's second advent from hundreds and thousands of pulpits. And as the end draws still nearer, the preaching of this doctrine will doubtless be both more frequent and more earnest. It may stir up opposition on the part of those who have the form, but not the power of religion ; for the devil hates the truth, and he will move some to oppose, and others to ridicule and scoff.

Sir Isaac Newton gave expression to an opinion which for some years has been proved true in a very remarkable manner. "About the time of the end," he remarked, "in all probability, a body of men will be raised up, who will turn their attention to the prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation in the midst of much clamour and opposition."

What will be another sign of the end we are informed by our Lord in these words : "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations ; and then shall the end come."—Matt. xxiv. 14. Observe, He does not say that the gospel shall be received by the whole world, but that it shall be preached in the whole world. Referring to this passage, Chrysostom remarks, "He said not when it hath been believed by all men, but when it hath been preached to all. For this cause, He also said for a witness to the nations to show that He doth not wait for all men to believe, and then for Him to come : since the phrase "for a witness," hath this meaning,—for accusation, for reproof for condemnation of them that have not believed." The progress that has been made during this nineteenth cen-

tury in making known the gospel in parts of the world where previously it was either unknown, or but little known, is very remarkable. It is a sign that the end of the age is approaching. The door for preaching the gospel is opening wider in all parts of France. Countries have been opened for the promulgation of the gospel which were previously closed against it. Then the Church Missionary Society was established at the beginning of this century; indeed, it is during the present century that the greater part of such institutions have been founded. And Bibles have been admitted into lands where their circulation was previously forbidden. But the opening up, during the last few years, of so many countries for the circulation of the Scriptures and the preaching of the Gospel, is a token, not that the world is going to be converted, but that the end is near—that the day is at hand when judgment shall come. This is the teaching of Jesus.

The events of the last few years, indicating the near approach of the Lord's second advent, are very important, and should be wisely improved. We are being duly warned, and should keep upon the watch tower, and the warning should be echoed and re-echoed at every opportunity.

Let us do what we can to check and hinder the rolling tide of iniquity, to oppose the efforts of the enemies of the cross, and to strengthen and encourage the friends of Jesus. It is a grand thing to live in these latter days when we may witness the appearing of Christ, if we are faithfully using our talents, and publishing the tidings of the kingdom, and doing all we do to His glory.

All admit that the hour of Christ's coming is hidden

from us. It is the truest wisdom, therefore, to inquire. If Christ should come in *this* hour, am I ready? Should I be caught up to meet Him, or should I be left to share in the terrible persecution by the Anti-christ, when that which now hinders his revelation, is removed.

It is evident from New Testament teaching that it is the design of the Holy Spirit to keep the church in a waiting posture. Great blessing would result from a state of constant readiness, watchfulness, and expectancy. The coming of the Bridegroom will bring joy and gladness to the Bride. It will be the greatest, the most wonderful, and the happiest event in all the church's history. That day will be of all days the brightest.

When we look upon an event as near, and not afar off, it must necessarily have a greater influence upon the mind. It is evident that the generality of even professors are influenced very little by the belief of the second coming of Christ, because they believe that He will not come yet for a thousand years, as they hold to the theory that a spiritual Millennium will take place before that event. But if it was their faith that there would be no Millennium till Christ came,—if they believed that His coming would be the beginning of that wonderful period, and that His coming was certainly near, it would exert a powerful influence upon their mind. It would be an incentive to an immediate preparation. The world would recede; the solemnities and glories of the future would be brought nearer to the soul's view; and interest in all the means of spiritual growth would deepen. It is making a sad mistake to put off an event a thousand years which may transpire to-morrow. There is no justifiable reason for indifference to the truth on this important point. Somewhere in the Bible

the truth is to be found, and it should be searched for until it is found, and then acted upon.

Rely upon it, the day is not very distant when Christ will come the second time; but, alas, thousands in the church, like the foolish virgins, are asleep; and they do not realize the nearness of the event. And how often is he derided who sounds the note of warning on this subject. But we must be faithful and bold and courageous. While many are crying, "My Lord delayeth His coming," and are living as though He would never come, we must show that His coming is near. While many are deceiving themselves with the hope of peace and safety, we must show that judgments and perils are at hand.

Our Lord frequently commands His disciples to watch on the ground that they are ignorant of the time of His coming. And evidently a great reward will follow the performance of this duty, while its neglect will be attended with great punishment. And the belief that the Lord's coming is near, tends to foster a spirit of watchfulness, and lead us to prepare for His appearing. Our days are few, yet their number is sufficient to enable us to get ready for that great event. But though there is reason to believe, from the signs which have appeared, that the coming of the Lord is near, let us never commit the error, into which some have fallen, of fixing the time *when* He shall come. It should be remembered that none have brought the subject of the second advent into such disrepute as some of its professed friends, who have been wise above what is written. They have dogmatized; they have spoken with too much certainty about things not clearly revealed. They have fixed dates, which as time has rolled on, have

made manifest their own untruthfulness, and brought reproach on their authors, and caused many to turn away from the subject without examining it.

While however we may not fix dates, we may know from certain signs, as we are taught in Scripture, that the Lord's coming cannot be far off. Some of the foregoing signs, as every true observer of men and things knows, have already actually appeared, and others we have not referred to, or dwelt upon, are making their appearance. He cannot be a wise observer of what is passing around him, who does not look upon the present state of Christendom, and the present condition of affairs, not only on the continent, but throughout the world, in the light of prophecy. Who does not see "upon the earth distress of nations," the people every where in perplexity and consternation?

If we believe the coming of the Lord to be at hand, how can we be too diligent, too earnest in His cause? How can we be too watchful, too prayerful, too much employed in devout meditation on the things of the future? How can we care too little for the perishing things of the world, or be too moderate in our use of them? We cannot be too un-earthly, too unselfish. Our day is far spent, it is now evening, the night is coming on; and we have no time for trifles, no time for useless disputations, no time for pleasure seeking, and no time for money-making, farther than we may be able to use it, in one way or another, for the divine glory.

X.

CHRIST'S COMING A MOTIVE TO HOLINESS AND USEFULNESS.

THE second coming of the Redeemer is urged, in various forms of words, as one of the most powerful motives to virtue, godliness, and benevolence. But this motive, to a great extent, is lost sight of by many preachers and writers, and in its stead death is set forth as one of the principal motives to repentance, conversion, and faith in Jesus.

The coming of the Lord is used as a motive to watchfulness. "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching."—Luke xii. 37. "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief . . . So then let us not sleep, as do the rest, but let us watch and be sober."—1 Thess. v. 4, 6.

The coming of the Lord is used as a motive to patience and stability. "Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand."—James v. 7, 8.

The appearing of Christ is made use of as a motive to mortification, or self-denial. "When Christ, who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, the which is idolatry."—Col. iii. 4, 5.

The appearing of the Saviour is used as an incentive to sobriety, righteousness, and godliness. "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world ; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."—Titus ii. 11-13.

The appearing of Jesus is used as a motive to purity. "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him even as He is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."—1 John iii. 2, 3.

The coming of Christ is used as a motive to love of the brethren. "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you ; to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints."—1 Thess. iii. 12, 13.

The coming of the Lord is used as a reason why we should not prejudge one another. "Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts."—1 Cor. iv. 5.

The appearing of Christ is used as a motive to faithful, unreserved, and continued consecration to God. "I charge thee in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a

good confession ; that thou keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Tim. vi. 13, 14.

The uncertainty of the hour of the Lord's coming, and the dissolving of the heavenly bodies and the wonderful change in the earth, are also given as a reason for entire consecration of life. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness."—2 Pet. iii. 10-12.

The grace that is to be brought to believers at the revelation of Christ, is referred to as a motive for girding up the loins of their mind, or to have their mind in a suitable frame and disposition ; for sobriety, or calmness, or composedness, and continued hope. "Wherefore girding up the loins of your minds, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. i. 13.

The appearing of Jesus is used by Peter as a motive for sustaining the church, or the body of believers ; for nourishing them with sound and christian doctrine, and putting them on their guard against false teaching ; for doing whatever is necessary to their growth in knowledge and holiness. "Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according unto God . . . And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away."—1 Pet. v. 2, 4.

The revelation of the Saviour's glory is employed by the apostle as a motive to encourage believers to endure suffering, or persecution for the sake of Christ. "But insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy."—1 Pet. iv. 13.

The great end to be gained by the trials of believers will not be fully manifest till the Saviour's appearing. "That the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. i. 7.

The coming of the Lord is used as a motive to our abiding in Him, to our continuing true and faithful, steadfast and unmovable. "And now, my little children, abide in Him; that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."—1 John ii. 28.

The joy to be experienced in the day of Christ is used as a motive to the faithful preaching of the Gospel. "Children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labour in vain. Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all; and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me."—Phil. ii. 15-18.

The coming of the Son of God is used as a motive for our retaining what we have already attained. "Howbeit, that which ye have, hold fast till I come."—Rev. ii. 25.

Christ's coming quickly, and the fear of losing our crown, are urged as incentives to our making sure of keeping the religion which we have,—the love and peace and hope which we possess. “I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown.”—Rev. iii. 11.

The ready attitude of the Judge, or His soon coming, is employed as an incentive to our avoiding a murmuring spirit. “Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the Judge standeth before the doors.”—James v. 9.

The uncertainty of the hour of Christ's coming is urged as a reason for being ready. “Be ye also ready; for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.”—Luke xii. 40.

And the nearness of the Lord's coming is used as a motive to forbearance, or gentleness, to calmness of soul to the shunning of party strife, or violence. “Let your, forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”—Phil. iv. 5.

From these motives and incitements we would draw an exhortation to hope,—perfect hope; for He who has promised to come, will not much longer delay. We are waiting and looking with expectation.

“We wait for Thee, all glorious One!
We look for Thine appearing;
We hear Thy name, and on the throne
We see Thy presence cheering.
Faith even now
Uplifts its brow,
And sees the Lord descending,
And with Him bliss unending.

We wait for Thee through days forlorn,
In patient self-denial ;
We know that Thou our guilt hast borne
Upon Thy cross of trial ;
And well may we
Submit with Thee
To bear the cross and love it,
Until Thy hand remove it.

We wait for Thee ; already Thou
Hast all our heart's submission ;
And though the spirit sees Thee now,
We long for open vision,
When ours shall be
Sweet rest with Thee,
And pure, unfading pleasure,
And life in endless measure.

We wait for Thee in certain hope—
The time will soon be over ;
With childlike longing we look up,
Thy glory to discover.
Oh bliss ! to share
Thy triumph there,
When home, with joy and singing,
The Lord His saints is bringing."

XI.

PROPHETIC DESCRIPTIONS OF THE ANTI-CHRIST.

As the Anti-christ is a subject of divine revelation, as various prophecies have set forth both his character and his destiny, it is our duty to compare them one with another and find out the true sense of the whole, as far as possible.

We are aware that two views prevail regarding the Anti-christ,—two chief views, we mean, for there are different phases or aspects of these views. One view is that by that term we are to understand the papacy, and that view places the Anti-christ, as to time, entirely in the past, or almost entirely in the past. The other view is, that the Anti-christ will be one who will rise up after the last ten kings in the end of the apostacy, and who will gather together the armies of the earth to fight against Jerusalem, after the Jews have gone back to their own land, and constituted themselves as a nation. We hold the latter view, and we hold it because, after having thoroughly examined the subject, as far as our ability has enabled us, we are fully persuaded it is the one borne out by the general tenour of the prophetic word. We believe with some of the most profound Biblical scholars and interpreters of prophecy, "that inasmuch as the personal coming of Christ is immediately to follow the revelation of the Anti-christ, such revelation cannot have yet taken place." Each view is doubtless attended with some difficulties, but we adopt that which is attended with the fewest and the least. Indeed, the nature of the subject is such that some phases of it will never be fully understood until they become history. This should teach us not to judge another with harsh or uncharitable judgment who may not see the subject in the same light that we do.

We would remind you that as believers in Jesus, we are not to *look* for the coming of the Anti-christ; we are to *look* for the coming of the *Son of God from heaven*. *He* is the hope of the church. It is for the manifestation of Jesus and His glory and His kingdom upon which our

hearts are to be set. And it seems plain from some passages, from some clearly revealed truths, that previous to the revelation of the Anti-christ, the Lord will come for His saints, both His living ones and His dead ones. When the Lord comes down in vengeance and in judgment, the Anti-christ is to be in the height of his power ; for it is then that the Lord destroys him. But when He comes, the prophet Zechariah says that all the saints come with Him. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable, that if they come with Him,—come with Him from heaven, as we are told in the Revelation,—the rapture of the living saints and the resurrection of the just must have been a previous event.

After the church, then, that is to be the Lamb's bride, has been removed, the apostacy will spread and iniquity will increase more rapidly, and out of it will arise the Anti-christ, and shortly after the unparalleled tribulation will take place. Speaking of the day of the Lord, the apostle says, "Let no man beguile you in any wise : for it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, he that opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God or that is worshipped ; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things ? And now ye know that which restraineth, to the end that he may be revealed in his own season. For the mystery of lawlessness doth already work : only there is one that restraineth now, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall be revealed the lawless one, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring

to nought by the manifestation of His coming ; even he, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing ; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved," 2 Thess. ii. 3—10. It will be observed that the apostle refers to a certain day, the day of the Lord, the day when divine judgments shall be poured out upon the ungodly. The day will not be, will not set in, or begin, until after the falling away and the manifestation of the Anti-christ. A distinction is made by the apostle between the working of the mystery of lawlessness, and the revelation of the Anti-christ, or the man of sin. The former had begun in Paul's day, and has continued through the ages ; it has never ceased working, and according to the sure word of prophecy, it will shortly work more powerfully ; but the latter has yet to take place. Some person or some thing has hitherto hindered his being revealed. Different opinions have been given as to who or what this hindrance is. In ancient times some thought it was the Roman Empire, and others, that it was God's decree. In later times some have thought the hindrance to be "*the fabric of human polity, and those who rule that polity*, by which the great up-bursting of godlessness is kept down and hindered." Others think it is the grace of the Spirit. We have been led to think that the Holy Spirit given to believers, or the true church with the Spirit of God operating in it, is the great hinderer to the standing up of the Anti-christ. While the church remains waiting, looking for its Lord, he is restrained. There is a check upon him. But he is restrained now that he may be revealed in his own season,

the time predetermined in the Divine counsel, that is, after the apostacy, or in the closing days of the apostacy. Then after he, or that thing, which now restraineth, is taken out of the way,—when the Spirit has withdrawn all restraint and the church is removed, the lawless one shall be revealed, shall be shown up or made known. He shall exalt himself not only above false gods, but above the only true God ; he shall become the open enemy of the true God, shall take his seat in the sanctuary, proclaim himself to be God, and demand worship. When this takes place, when the temple is defiled by idolatry, then it is certain that the end of the desolator is near,—that the coming of Christ in vengeance with all His saints will follow shortly after, and the lawless one shall be slain, and the sanctuary shall be cleansed.

The Anti-christ then will be a man ; he will also be a king ; he will be one of the kings of the revived Roman empire, the greatest of all earthly kings, to whom Satan will give stupendous power,—power to work extraordinary miracles, by which he will deceive the multitude, and cause men to do him homage. Dean Alford, after a very close and critical examination of the Scriptures bearing on this subject, declares his conviction that the Anti-christ of prophecy will be a personal Anti-christ. He says, “The Christ and the Anti-christ stand over against one another, and analogy requires that if the one be personal, the other should be also.” The Dean also collated the opinions of the early Christian fathers on this point, and he says, “Their interpretation is for the most part well marked and consistent. They all regard it as a prophecy of the future, as yet unfulfilled when they wrote . . . They all regard the

adversary here described as an individual person, the incarnation and concentration of sin."

While positive proof is lacking, there is nevertheless some ground for believing that he will be a Jew by profession. The Jews are called "his fathers," in the expression in Dan. xi. 37, "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers," which is certainly a pretty clear intimation that he will be a Jew. The same thing is implied also in the fact that he will make a covenant with the Jews. Some of the fathers of the early church, Irenæus and Hippolytus, believed that the Anti-christ "is to come of the tribe of Dan among the Hebrews, and this fact is given as the reason why this tribe is not mentioned among the sealed of Rev. vii." The prophet Jeremiah seems to give an intimation of this in the following passage:—"The snorting of his horses was heard from Dan: the whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of his strong ones; for they are come, and have devoured the land, and all that is in it; the city and those that dwell therein."—Jer. viii. 16. Jacob also said, "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward."—Gen. xl ix. 17.

Holy Scripture teaches us that while there are many anti-christs,—men who deny Christ, and in some degree, usurp the authority of Christ, and thus thrust themselves where Christ only should be, there will one arise in the last times of great pretensions, and of wonderful power, who will merit the designation, vastly more than any other, of the Anti-christ. These several important points will all be made clear, as we proceed, from various passages of the Old and New Testament. The apostle John is very plain

and full on this subject. We will refer shortly to what he says in the Revelation, but at present we will give you what he says in his epistles. "Little children," he says, "it is the last hour: and as ye heard that anti-christ cometh, even now have there arisen many anti-christs; whereby we know that it is the last hour." "This is the anti-christ, even he that denieth the Father and the Son;" that is, denies the relation in which the Son stands to the Father, denies His incarnation. "Every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the anti-christ, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already."—1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3. "For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the anti-christ."—2 John 7. He who having once professed to know Christ, denies Him; who having once professed to receive Christ as the Messiah, rejects Him; who having once acknowledged His supreme divinity, teaches that he is no more than a man, and tramples on His glory which, with the Father He possessed ere the world was;—he who thus denies the Son,—and denying the Son denies the Father also, the one being included in the other,—is an anti-christ. Of this character, according to John, there are many. According to history many have risen up at different periods who have tried to establish their claim to be the great deliverer promised to the Jewish nation. All of these have been so many anti-christs. And the Anti-christ of the last time will be of the same character, morally, but his denial of the Father and the Son will be bolder, more daring, and will be made

with more hatred and more bitterness of spirit. His sin, his denial of God and of truth, and his evil influence and abominations will spread further and wider than those of any previous anti-christ. His temporal power also as king will furnish him with the means and opportunity for all this. "It is the union of *all*," says Alford, "in some one personal appearance, that shall make the full Anti-christ, as the union in one Person, Jesus of Nazareth, of all the types and prophecies, constituted the full Christ."

Beside this, he will assume the authority, and set himself up in the stead, of the true Christ, as we learn from the passage just quoted from the apostle Paul, who adds these and some other particulars which John omits in his epistles, and upon which we will here add a few additional remarks. He is called "the man of sin," plainly intimating that he will go farther into sin than any who have preceded him; that his sins will be greater in magnitude and guilt; that he will be the vilest and the most daring transgressor in the world; and that he will be the leader of others in transgression. He is called "the son of perdition," from which it is evident that he will resemble Judas in professing friendship and practising the grossest deception. He is also called, in the 8th verse, "the lawless one." This expression is very emphatic, meaning the wicked, unrighteous, ungodly one, who will act without regard to any law, whether of God or man; he will make his own will the only law which he will obey. In the 4th verse the apostle further describes him as "setting himself forth as God," from which we learn that he will oppose the true God and His well beloved Son; his whole

policy will be in direct opposition to the divine government, and he will claim honours that belong only to Deity ; yea, he will declare himself to be greater than the greatest beside him who bears that designation.

In the seventh chapter of Daniel we have a long account of some wonderful night visions, in which he saw four great beasts come up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first beast, he tells us, was like a lion, and had eagle's wings ; the second was like to a bear ; the third was like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl, and it had also four heads ; and the fourth beast he seems to be at a loss to know unto what to liken it ; but he says it was "dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly ; and it had great iron teeth : it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it : and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it ; and it had ten horns." He considered the horns, he says, "and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots : and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." Now it is the little horn mentioned here that symbolizes the Anti-christ. We would remark, for the sake of those not familiar with the language of symbols, that the term beast is used to represent a governmental power, or combined worldly powers, and sometimes it is used to represent the king who is at the head of that power, or those powers. Though we shall have occasion to refer to this distinction again, yet as much confusion and error prevails by overlooking it, or denying it, we would remark here, that the prophet himself, in this chap-

ter, clearly sets forth this distinction. In verse 17, the term beasts is used for kings. Daniel says, "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings." The term beast is also used for kingdom. Speaking of the fourth beast, it is said in verse 23, "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom." These terms are used interchangeably. A kingdom must have a king, or one who holds the reins of government. Now speaking of the fourth beast, Daniel says, "it had ten horns," and of these he gives us the interpretation. He says, the ten horns are ten kings. And among these ten horns, or kings, there came up another little horn, or king, "before whom there were three of the first horns, or kings, plucked up by the roots;" or as he states further on in the chapter, "And he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings." This latter clause, in plainer language, confirms the statement of the other. Subduing them, he causes them to unite with him. They become tributary to him. When any king is very great and mighty, and he is about to conquer a certain people, and that people see that they will be conquered, they will submit to him and acknowledge him, and unite with him, rather than keep resisting when they see nothing before them but extermination as the result. The same things are stated in Rev. xvii. 11: "And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven." Having put down three of the ten kings, there are seven left. He is called the eighth, being a different head, and yet he comes from the seven; he rises up among them, or after them, and possesses all the bad elements of the ten. He usurps the power of the fourth beast, and because he will lead a

number of kingdoms,—for the ten kings represent ten kingdoms,—he is himself called a beast. One writer remarks, “The eighth head, though an undivided ruler, is spoken of as the beast or empire, because he is morally the empire, directing, as supreme, all its authority. He is of the seven, for there will be a continuance or taking up of some such form of power as before. But he will be the eighth, because there will be something so peculiar as to deserve a name to itself. That new feature may refer, perhaps, to the diabolical power that stamps the beast in his last or quasi-resurrection state.”

M. Baxter believes, from Dan. vii. 24, “that the little horn or last Anti-christ *will not arise as a horn or sovereign power to run his prophetic career, until after ten horns or monarchs have all distinctly made their appearance reigning over the whole extent of Cæsar’s original Roman Empire, and allied together in a confederacy, for the emblem of ten horns on one corporate body implies that the ten kings will be united in one confederacy as members of one political corporation.* Still further, in Dan. viii. 9, this little horn is predicted to arise as a sovereign in one of the four eastern horn-kingdoms—Greece, Thrace, Syria, or Egypt.” Theodoret, of the fifth century, understood by “the little horn the Anti-christ, who would be a human being, made the agent of Satan, and of whom Antiochus is the type.” Daniel also says that his “look was more stout than his fellows,” an expression which implies determination and self-will. He further says, “And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hands until a time and

times and the dividing of times. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end." This description corresponds with that given of "the man of sin," by the apostle Paul.

We would here offer a word of explanation on one point, on which it may seem to some that we have spoken contrary to the words of the prophet. We have previously said that the people of God, or the saints of the Lord, will be removed from the earth before the revelation of "the man of sin" and the time of awful persecution; and by the saints, or the people of God, we mean all true believers, whether Jews or Gentiles. But the prophet says, verse 21, speaking of the Anti-christ under the designation of the horn, or king, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them." The explanation of this apparent difficulty is easy. The saints who will escape the dreadful persecution led on by "the man of sin," will be those who will constitute the Lamb's bride, and who will be gathered into the presence of the Bridegroom, prior to the commencement of that period. The saints who will suffer that persecution will be chiefly those of the Jews, dwelling in their own country, who have sought and turned unto the Lord, between the period of the Bridegroom's advent when the church shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and the period when Christ shall come to destroy His foes and deliver His people Israel, from the power of the Anti-christ. And between these two periods there will be at least an interval of three years and a half, during which time many will be led to seek the Lord. And the transplanting of those who

are fully prepared for the appearing of the Saviour, may be the means of awakening and quickening to multitudes who are not ready, and who, though then converted, will be left to pass through the fiery trials of the closing days.

A further reference seems to be clearly made to the Anti-christ by the prophet Daniel in the eighth chapter of his prophecies. "And in the latter time of their kingdom when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. And through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify himself in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand."—Verses 23-25. The Anti-christ is here designated "a king of fierce countenance;" that is, harsh, severe, savage, with angry, furious look; with a fixed, settled resolution; with an unrelenting, unyielding, and a self-dependent spirit, which identifies him with the horn, or king of the previous chapter, where it is said that his "look was more stout than his fellows." It is declared that he shall understand "dark sentences," by which is probably meant that he shall be able to accomplish things by a secret and an invisible agency; and this fully accords with Paul's description of his coming, which he says, "shall be with all miracles, and signs, and lying wonders." "And his power," the prophet says, "shall be mighty, but not by his own power." That is, he will have mighty power given to him by another, by Satan,

which is proved by a reference to Rev. xiii. 2, where John declares, "And the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority." The prophet also says, "And he shall magnify himself in his heart," and shall also stand up against the Prince of princes," which agrees fully with Paul's declaration of him, "That opposeth and exalteth himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped." This is evidence of the awful depth of his depravity and pride. The prophet further says, that "through his policy also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand," "and by peace shall destroy many." The word here translated peace would be better rendered, as in the marginal reference, prosperity. Such success will attend his schemes and plans as will cause his subjects to increase in wealth; and by this means many, when he shows himself in the stead of the true Christ, and sets up his arrogant claims to divine homage, will be beguiled into idolatry. For how little men care for their souls in comparison with wealth. This view you will find confirmed by a reference to Rev. xviii. 9—13, where mention is made of the wonderful wealth and grandeur of that great city Babylon, which word is now often used to symbolize a system of general corruption, and falsehood, and infidelity, and abomination, and the worst idolatry, at the head of which will be "the man of sin." At the close of the prophet's description of the wicked one, he foretells his doom. "But he shall be broken without hand." This expression implies that his destruction will be effected without the aid of human means. And how this accords again with what Paul says, "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming."

We have yet a further description of the Anti-christ by the prophet Daniel, in the eleventh chapter of his prophecies. "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all." There is a peculiar phrase here, "the desire of women," about which there is a difference of opinion, as it is not easy to tell its precise meaning. Some have adopted the opinion that it refers to the worship of Mylitta, the Syrian goddess; but this does not seem probable. "The expression clearly, to my mind," says H. Goodwyn, "refers to Christ—the one to whom all Jews were looking forward, and whose birth must have been above all things desired by Jewish women. It is plain from the connection, that such is the true meaning. For it occurs between 'the God of his fathers,' (Jehovah) and "any God." Nothing is less likely than, if it had merely referred to natural relationship, that it would have been thus placed." "But in his estate," the prophet continues, "shall he honour the god of forces: and a God whom his fathers knew not shall he honour with gold, and silver, and with precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strongholds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain." Here is evidence of glaring inconsistency. Although the Anti-christ will be guilty of abominable idolatry in requiring

men to worship himself, he also will pay homage to a strange god. "And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him; and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships."—verses 36-40. It is the one who in the first of these passages is called "the king," who is the Anti-christ, and the kings of the south and north are said, in the last of these passages, to come against him. By the king of the south is meant the one who will then be reigning in Egypt; and by the king of the north is meant the Assyrian. These two sovereigns will be opposed to the Anti-christ, here designated "the king." The Assyrian especially will be a bitter enemy and will come against him with fury. Though both of them will be awfully sinful and depraved, and both of them will be opposed to Israel, yet there is no union between them in their sinful ways. In connection with the Anti-christ, reference is made by the Holy Spirit to the dividing of the land, which can only be the land of Judea, as it is called two verses further on in the chapter, "the glorious land." In this land the Anti-christ, therefore, will establish himself, and claim sovereignty over the Lord's people. He will claim to be king in Judea.

It is very remarkable how the portrait given of the Anti-christ in these passages, answers to the portrait given of him in other parts of Daniel's prophecies, and also to that given by the apostle Paul. Statements agreeing so one with another, and uttered at different periods by different writers, show them to be inspired by the same Holy Spirit. According to these passages, the Anti-christ is to pay no regard to the will of the Most High, but

simply regard his own will; instead of exalting God, he will exalt himself till he reaches the very highest pinnacle of pride. And in the pride of his heart, and the enmity of his mind against Jehovah, he will charge the holy God with folly. And he will continue his iniquitous course, and prosper, and get gain, and increase in glory, till Jehovah's purpose is fully executed,—till Israel are scourged for their sins, and the time for their restoration is come, —and then he shall receive his own doom. Speaking of these marks of the Anti-christ, Dr. Pusey says, "The character, is a blank denial of God, not a forgetfulness, nor a practical impiety, nor insolent spoliation; but a self-idolatry, a self-deifying, which shall compete with the true God, and look down on all besides, as being himself greater than they."

In the Revelation we have a still further and fuller description of the Anti-christ, inasmuch as some particulars respecting him are mentioned which are not named in the descriptions previously considered. We may expect the latter predictions to be the fullest and most minute; and some things in the earlier must be explained by those contained in the latter. God bestowed upon His servant John many wonderful revelations, and the following is not the least remarkable:—"And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his

death-stroke was healed: and the whole earth wondered after the beast; and they worshipped the dragon, because he gave his authority unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? and who is able to war with him? and there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth for blasphemies against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, even them that dwell in the heaven. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation. And all that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world."—Rev. xiii. 1-8. This beast symbolizes united worldly, persecuting powers. All the elements, all the opposing powers of the three previous beasts were concentrated in this; for John says he "was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion." The Grecian, the Persian, and the Babylonian empires, therefore, were all exhibited, in their worst features, in the beast that John saw.

Verse 2: "And the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority." The power put forth by this beast is of satanic origin, and the devil uses him for his own diabolical designs, for opposing Christ and his people.

Verse 3: "And I saw one of his heads as though it had been smitten unto death; and his death stroke was

healed." Alford says, "This seems to represent the Roman pagan empire, which having long been a head of the beast, was crushed and to all appearance exterminated." We think it is more probable that it represents the Babylonian head. Some indeed may think the Babylonian never to have been a head of the fourth beast, but John recognises the features of the first three beasts in the fourth beast.

But this death stroke is healed. This we think refers to the re-establishment of Babylon, which seems necessary to the fulfilment of prophecy.

Verse 5 : "And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." This is said of the little horn that comes up among the ten horns of the fourth beast of Dan. vii. "And he shall speak great words against the most High." verse 25.

Verse 5 : "And there was given to him authority to continue forty and two months." That is, three years and a half, which accords with Daniel's statement respecting the length of time that the little horn shall persecute the saints. "And they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time."—Dan. vii. 25. We believe Alford's explanation of the 42 months is correct: "The well known period of the agency of Anti-christ; 3½ years; 1260 days." This refers specially to the time in which he is allowed to carry out his evil designs.

Reference is made in the first verse to the fact of his having ten horns, from which it is clear that the Anti-christ cannot appear till the formation of the ten kingdoms has taken place. And the term beast is not only used here as symbolical of anti-christian power, but it is ap-

plied to the Antichrist, the leader of the world-powers in their last form. And it is doubtless applied to him, not only because he is the great leader of the united powers symbolized by the beast, but because he embodies in himself the wicked, cruel, and persecuting elements or principles of those powers. And these last combined powers are to exist on what was once the Roman earth, which is the reason why we say the Roman empire will be resuscitated or revived. They will still be the fourth great world power or empire.

There cannot be the least doubt then but the highly favoured John is here setting forth "the man of sin", under the figure of the beast. J. Kelly believes that this beast who comes up out of the sea is the Anti-christ. By his rising up out of the sea we are to understand his rising up out of a heaving, swelling, surging, troubled condition of things,—a condition of political confusion and rebellion. Mention, however, is made in the eleventh verse of another beast who comes up out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb, and who speaks as a dragon, and who, Mr. Kelly believes, as indeed is evident from the context, will act as agent for the Antichrist. It is proved by comparing Rev. xiii. 11—14, with Rev. xix. 20, that he is the false prophet. There are several things spoken concerning this beast who comes up out of the sea, which have been affirmed both by Daniel and Paul. He will be a most daring blasphemer, so much so that he will carry the mark of blasphemy upon him. He will be haughty, proud, filled with vain glory, and will court the applause, the honours, yea, the worship of the whole world. And he will oppress and fight against the

people of God, and put many to death. And his power to persecute will be great and terrible, for Satan will give him his power.

We would here remark, to prevent any misunderstanding of what is said in Rev. xiii., respecting the Anti-christ by a comparison of it with what is said in Rev. xvii., that Rev. xvii., does not treat of the same period of his history as Rev. xiii. "It treats," says B. W. Newton, "of the more early history of Anti-christ. It supplies the history before the Ten kings, who finally divide the Roman Empire, give him their authority; and before he and they unite in destroying the harlot. The thirteenth chapter describes him *after* he has ceased to be the servant of the harlot, and *after* the Ten kings are crowned—for in the thirteenth chapter, the ten horns which represent them are crowned. The thirteenth chapter as to time, commences when the seventeenth ends.

"The difference of symbol in the seventeenth and thirteenth chapter is very distinctly marked.

"In the seventeenth chapter, Anti-christ is represented by a Beast with ten horns *uncrowned*—in the thirteenth, by a Beast with ten horns *crowned*. In the seventeenth chapter, he is sustaining some wicked system represented by a Harlot—in the thirteenth chapter, having destroyed the Harlot, he is himself supreme. In the seventeenth chapter the Harlot is the object of attraction to the nations—in the thirteenth, he is himself worshipped. The seventeenth chapter is unlimited as to time—the thirteenth, is confined to 1260 days."

Referring to the covenant which the Anti-christ makes with Israel, and which is the first event named in prophecy

of his connection with Jerusalem, Mr. Newton says, "He makes it for seven years. This we learn from the ninth chapter. About seven months after he has made this covenant, he begins to "practise" in Jerusalem, probably then visiting it for the first time. This we learn from the eighth chapter—the vision in which, avowedly respects *the whole period during which he practises in Jerusalem and has power over the sanctuary*. That period is said to be 2300 days, i.e. seven years wanting about seven months. At the half of the seven years, and therefore about two years and five months after he begins to practise in Jerusalem, he takes away the daily sacrifice, and sets the abomination of desolation in the holy place; and this continues for 1260 days or three years and a half. Thus we have three points in his history. *First*, the formation of his covenant. *Secondly*, the commencement of his actings in Jerusalem. *Thirdly*, his violation of his covenant and establishment of the Idol. The covenant is for seven years; the practising for six years and five months;—the worship of the idol for three years and a half."

It may be well here to offer a few remarks on the period, or the length of time, that the great desolator is allowed to lay waste. We have already had occasion to use several of the Scriptural phrases which refer to that period: "1260 days," Rev. xii. 6, "forty and two months," Rev. xiii. 5, both of which terms mean the same,—three years and a half. Also "a time and times and the dividing of time," Dan. vii. 25, which we believe means exactly the same period. Time denoting one year, times denoting two years, and the dividing of time half a year, making three years and a half. There are however some able writers who

contend very earnestly that the 1260 days are 1260 years, counting each day for a year; and that there has been one dreadful desolation which commenced with the establishment of popery, and which has continued through the ages and will continue to the end. But we believe the year-day system, as applied to these terms, to be erroneous. The advocates of this theory interpret the expression in Daniel, "a time and times and the dividing of time," to mean 1260 years. But we can show the falsehood of this interpretation from Daniel himself. Chapter iv. 23, 32, which foretold that Nebuchadnezzar should have "his portion with the beasts of the field, till seven times pass over him," utterly disproves that assertion. If time means years, and is to be interpreted on the year-day theory, each year signifying as many years as there are days, 365, this would make Nebuchadnezzar "to eat grass as oxen," 2520 years. To simply name this is to show its absurdity and falsehood. The king lived through those seven times, or seven years, and at the end of the days his reason returned to him, and he blessed the Most High. Now if Daniel used the word times for natural years in the fourth chapter of his prophecies, as we are sure he does, he could not use the very same expression in a totally different sense in the seventh chapter of his prophecies, without some intimation to that effect. Besides, the same period that the prophet refers to by the expression, "a time, times, and the dividing of time,"—three and a half natural years,—is referred to by John the divine. In chapter xii. 14, he uses a similar expression to that of Daniel, "a time, and times, and half a time." And to set forth the same period, in chapter xi. 2, he uses the term "forty and two

months," just three years and a half; and in the next verse he uses the words, "a thousand two hundred and three score days," precisely the same period. Nothing need be plainer than this. Hence the year-day theory applied here is a monstrous blunder.

From Rev. xii. we learn that the devil and satan, during the unequalled period of trial, will be cast down to the earth "for a time, and times, and half a time." Until then, he is "the prince of the power of the air." "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."—Ephes. ii. 2; vi. 12. But if the phrase "time, and times, and half a time," denotes 1260 years, then satan was cast down to the earth about the commencement of the Papacy, and Paul's words with respect to the church wrestling against the principalities and the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places, or the aerial regions, cannot be true.

The woman of Rev. xii. 13—17, is represented as flying "into the wilderness unto her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." And the dragon thought to overwhelm the woman with water which he cast out of his mouth as a river, but he failed, for the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river; on account of which the dragon was very angry with the woman, and went away to make war with the rest of her seed. Now if time, times, and half a time is interpreted to mean three and a half literal years, it agrees with the other Scriptures; but if it is interpreted on the year-day system, to

mean 1260 years, there is no sense in which it is true. It does not accord with the facts of history. If the woman represents the Jewish Church, as some think, there is no sense in which she has escaped the wrath of the dragon during the 1260 years. All history is against the idea. And if the woman represents the Christian Church, as others think, there is still no sense in which she has escaped the wrath of the dragon during that long period.

Again; some may be anxious to know, if possible, whence this wicked usurper will come, or in what part of the world he will make his appearance. From all that can be learned from the Scriptures, the probability is that he will appear in the east.

“That the Anti-christ is to arise from the eastern part of the Roman empire,” says B. W. Newton, “and from that part of the East, which fell under the rule of Alexander’s successors, is rendered unquestionable by this chapter. (Dan. viii.) But seeing that in the eleventh chapter, he is mentioned as *conflicting* with the King of the North (*i.e.* the King of Syria), and with also the King of the South (*i.e.* the King of Egypt), it is plain that he does not arise either from Egypt or Syria. He must therefore arise either from Greece, or from Turkey. It is true, that if he arose from the latter, or indeed, from either of the four, he would be esteemed *Greek* in origin, because all the four were *divisions* of the *Greek* empire; but it seems, I think, far more probable, that *Greece Proper* will be the place of his rise. He is described, as “waxing great toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land;” that is, toward Egypt, Syria, and Pales-

tine,—a description that would geographically suit the position of one, who was supposed to be in Greece. His being a little horn also, would seem an appropriate emblem for one connected with Greece—a country insignificant in extent, and at present, feeble in power.”

The Roman empire once extended from the Euphrates to Britain. Nearly all the Turkish empire as now existing is embraced by what was formerly the Roman empire: hence, to fulfil Scripture, it will not become annexed to Russia, as some have thought, but will be a part of the ten kingdoms mentioned in Dan. vii. 24, which will be united in opposition to the Lord and His people. All the extent of country from the Euphrates to Britain is to be divided into these kingdoms, and there will be great prosperity in them for a short season; but it will only be for a short season, for it will be succeeded by the unprecedented time of trouble; and in the end they will fall when the Anti-christ falls, who prior to his being made known as the Anti-christ, shall be one of their ten kings, and who afterwards shall reign over the whole, and persecute the saints until the Ancient of Days shall come

Additional light will be thrown on this part of our subject by a brief reference to the several universal empires, of which the Roman was to be the fourth, and the fifth, the universal kingdom of our Lord. And it is about the time of the end of the Roman empire, and before the establishment of the reign of Christ that the Anti-christ will appear.

We are fully aware of a seeming difficulty here. It will be said that the Roman empire has ceased to exist. In a sense this is true, but it is just as true, in another sense, that it will be re-established. Pagan Rome fell under

Alaric in the year 410. After this, corruptions in the church grew and multiplied more rapidly. Little by little the Papacy was formed, and as the lust for power increased, one decree after another was passed curtailing the liberties of the people. A rise of the Papal power took place in 590 when Gregory the Great was made Pope. Then in the year 606, Phocas, the emperor, made an edict which gave to Pope Boniface the chief ecclesiastical government of all the churches, both Western and Eastern. We may here remark, by way of parenthesis, that those who make the 1260 days to be 1260 years, and reckon from this date, make the apostacy to have run out at the time (1866-70) when the Romish Church lost their temporal power. But the Papacy rose still higher in power in 663, when Pope Vitalian decreed that "all the services of the Church throughout Christendom should be read in Latin." We may further remark, by way of parenthesis, that if reckoned from this date, on the year-day system, the apostacy will have run out about the year 1923. An end then has come to the temporal power of the Papacy, after existing for more than twelve centuries. Indeed, if we date the rise of the Papal power from 606, which is the year usually reckoned from, it has already been exercised 1260 years. For a few years now, the Romish church, as a civil power, has ceased to exist; and as such, we believe it will never exist again. But the Roman empire, as a temporal power, or as combined temporal powers, will exist again. In a divided state it has existed for centuries past; in that state it exists to-day; shortly it will be formed into a league of ten kingdoms, which will no doubt include Babylon. This is clear, we think from Rev. xvii. 8, which speaks of the

beast that "was, and is not; and is about to come up out of the abyss, and go into perdition." Its ascending out of "the abyss," shows that its character shall be devilish. That beast symbolizes "the man of sin," and the ten kings shall receive power at the same period as the beast. The empire and the ten kingdoms will exist contemporaneously. These kingdoms will be in alliance with the Anti-christ, and will bear the impress of the devil.

But we will refer, as we intimated we would, to the several universal empires, as a means of elucidating this subject more fully.

According to Daniel and the evangelist Luke (Dan. ii. and Luke xxii.) there were to be four universal empires, and it is generally admitted that Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome are those monarchies. The last, however, for some years, as just stated, has been deprived of its civil power. Mention is made in Daniel of an image composed of various metals, and the majority of commentators regard those metals as symbolizing Chaldea, Persia, Greece, and Rome, empires which were to succeed one another in this order.

Those empires are also symbolized by Daniel's vision of the four beasts. (Dan. vii.) This prophecy of the four beasts is thought by some not to correspond to the metals of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream; but in our judgment the correspondence is unmistakeable. There can be no reasonable doubt that the figure of the great image which Nebuchadnezzar saw represented the four universal monarchies; and a comparison will show that the four wild beasts which Daniel saw were designed to set forth the same. Elliott tells us that Cyril, "like

the Fathers before him, explained the four wild beasts of Daniel vii. to be the Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman empires, and thought that when Rome fell it would be dissolved into ten cotemporaneous kingdoms, and then Anti-christ, whom he called "some great man raised up by the devil,"—at first mild, &c., would come and eradicate three of the ten kings, and subjugate the other seven, and reign three years and a half, persecuting the church ; then Christ would destroy him."

Hippolytus, bishop of Porto, and who flourished about the year 220, and therefore while the Roman empire existed in an undivided state, was a pre-millenialist. He had a clear view of these remarkable visions. Speaking of the two together, he says, "The golden head of the image, and the lioness, denoted the Babylonians; the shoulders and arms of silver, and the bear, represented the Persians and Medes; the belly and thighs of brass, and the leopard meant the Greeks, who held the sovereignty from Alexander's time; the legs of iron, and the beast dreadful and terrible, expressed the Romans, who hold the sovereignty at present; the toes of the feet, which were part clay and part iron, and the ten horns, were emblems of the kingdoms that are yet to rise; the other little horn that grows up among them meant the Anti-christ in their midst; the stone that smites the earth and brings judgment upon the world was Christ. . . After a little space the Stone *will come* from heaven which smites the image and breaks it in pieces, and subverts all the kingdoms, and gives the kingdom to the saints of the Most High. This is the Stone which becomes a great mountain and fills the whole earth."

According to Elliott, this bishop "gives a full exposition of Daniel's prophecies of the four kingdoms, which, with all the other fathers, he pronounces to be Babylon, Persia, Macedon, and Rome, then existing, "and what then," he adds, "remains for accomplishment but the division of the iron image into its ten toes—the growing out of the fourth Beast's head of its ten horns."

"Babylon," says W. Trotter, "is figured by the first beast, which resembles a lion with eagle's wings. Medo-Persia is represented by the second "like unto a bear; and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh." The third beast, Grecia, is like a leopard with four wings of a fowl and four heads: the well known symbols of the fourfold division of the Grecian empire after Alexander's death. It is to the fourth beast, however, the Roman empire, that attention is chiefly called: and further, there is one particular in the representation of this, on which the prophet's attention seems to be specially concentrated, as to which he makes anxious inquiries, and as to which he receives fuller instruction."

Another writer says, "The features of the fourth beast are clearly drawn. It is strong exceedingly; it devours and breaks in pieces, and tramples the residue under foot. It has not the same character as the preceding monarchies. It has ten horns, that is to say, its strength was to be divided into ten distinct powers. Strength and rapacity sparing and respecting nothing, appropriating everything, or trampling it under foot without regard to conscience; such are morally the characteristics of the fourth beast. Its division into ten kingdoms distinguishes it as to its form.

The uniform simplicity of the other empires will be lacking it."

The Roman kingdom began to be divided in the fifth century. It was about this period that the Goths and Vandals fought against it. Pagan Rome fell, it is said, in the year 410. Some say that the fall of the Western part of the empire took place in the year 476. Others say it continued its existence till A.D. 731. It fell under Romulus Augustulus.

The division of the Eastern part of the Roman empire took place in the year 1453, when the Turks took possession of Constantinople. And prophecy assures us that it will be formed into ten divisions. These kingdoms, (most of them existing now), will exist where the Roman monarchy once existed. Nothing can be more clearly set forth in the Book than these ten kingdoms in the end of the fourth empire. These are symbolized by the ten toes of the great image, Dan. ii. 24; by the ten horns of the fourth beast, Dan. vii. 7; by the ten horns of the beast that rises up out of the sea, Rev. xiii. 1; and by the ten horns of the beast that was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss, Rev. xvii. 8. Between all these there is a clear identification. "Cæsar's Roman empire consisted of the North Coast of Africa, Egypt, Syria, modern Turkey, all Europe south of the Danube and west of the Rhine, and Britain." And the ten kingdoms will exist, it is believed by M. Baxter, five in the western half, and five in the eastern half; and he thinks that they will be Britain, France, Spain with Portugal, Italy, Southern Austria, Tripoli with Tunis, Egypt, Greece, Syria, and Central Turkey." "Britain was geographically part of

the Roman Empire for 400 years; therefore it must be a part of that empire when it shall be fully revived in a Ten kingdomed Confederacy during the final seven or eight years." Paul Foskett says, "The Roman Empire was bounded by the Danube and Rhine, and included England, which was also identified with it by allegiance to the Latin or Papal Church. What country was more thoroughly united to Rome, than England by Augustine? Where was Peter's pence more regularly paid? Where could more monasteries, nunneries, shrines, crosses, together with penances and pilgrimages, be found? The nations of Europe were nothing like so Roman Catholic as England. England was first and last among the Crusaders. It was from the Pope that king John received his crown, and Henry viii. his title of 'Defender of the Faith.' "

But the smiting of the image mentioned in Dan. ii. 35, and the breaking up of these ten kingdoms, is to take place in the period represented by the iron and clay. Before the end, the principle of democracy, set forth by the potters' clay and iron in the feet and toes of the image, will force itself into recognition. Both kingly powers and absolute independent powers will have to recognize the democratic principle. As iron will not mix with miry clay, so there will be principles of government opposed to each other that will not work together. Already these predictions are beginning to be fulfilled. There is being cherished a spirit of lawlessness. Men are tired of their rulers, and want to rule themselves. They are trying to sever the ties that bind society together. This democratic principle is seen as the last part of the interpretation of the image.

Nebuchadnezzar was the first king placed over the Gentile

nations. There was given to him a great pre-eminence, which is indicated by his being the head of gold. God had made him the greatest man on the earth; He had given him dominion and power such as he had given to none else. Proud, aspiring, and ambitious as he was, the wide imperial rule given to him perhaps exceeded his thoughts. But instead of giving God the glory, he took the glory to himself. He regarded himself as being what he was by his own skill and might. It was not Nebuchadnezzar's own wisdom or power that had gained him possession of the kingdom; for providential reasons God had given it to him; and to God only was he responsible for the exercise of that great power. But he awfully abused that gift. He was guilty of idolatry, and even commanded it, and used his power in endeavouring to put down those who would not conform to his will. He captured Jerusalem and burnt the temple about the year 3552. But the Lord punished him for his wickedness. He had a vision of a tree. This tree which was to be hewn down and destroyed, represented the king's partial destruction for a while. His reason was taken from him; his heart was changed from man's, and a beast's heart was given unto him until seven times should pass over him. He had exalted not God, but himself, and now God debases him in a terrible manner. He is reduced, in a sense, to the condition of the beasts of the field. See Dan. iv. 16. When he had his reason, he refused to acknowledge God; and now as a punishment he is brought down to a state in which he has no capacity to apprehend God. He has lost his understanding, his intelligence, that which so wonderfully distinguishes man from the beast.

And as Nebuchadnezzar was guilty of idolatry, and pride, and persecution, so all the monarchs who followed him were guilty of the same sins. When Belshazzar, the king, Nebuchadnezzar's son, who occupied the throne after his father, was slain, the empire of Babylon came to an end. The capture of Babylon by Cyrus took place in the year 538 before the Christian era.

After the fall of the Chaldean empire there sprang up the Medo-Persian. "Although Darius the Mede takes the kingdom on the fall of Babylon, yet Cyrus the Persian is the one who acquires the supremacy in due time, and after that it is always the Persian that is more particularly mentioned." The men of noble birth in a great measure held the reins of government. It was under this monarchy that Daniel was cast into the lions' den. This monarchy was inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar. But the empire of Persia was at length overcome by Macedon.

The Grecian succeeds the Medo-Persian empire. This third empire was larger than that of Persia. It was built up and established by Alexander the Great. By the great horn mentioned in Dan. viii. 21, is meant Alexander; we there learn that he was the first king of Grecia. And Alexander over the Grecian empire, like Nebuchadnezzar over the Chaldean empire, had universal dominion. He is also referred to in Dan. xi. 4. The Greeks then became the rulers of Jerusalem.

Another of the Grecian monarchs, Antiochus Epiphanes, was a very cruel man and greatly oppressed and persecuted the Jews. He manifested opposition to the true God; and some have taken the descriptions of him in Daniel as referring to the Anti-christ: but vile and wicked as Antiochus

was, he will be outstripped by him, of whom he may be considered a type, who will arise during the fourth empire in its resuscitated and divided form. Dr. Pusey, in his learned work on Daniel, shows that of six marks which belong to the Anti-christ, only one, in the least, agrees with Antiochus. The prophet portrayed the character of Antiochus in the 8th chapter. His description corresponds with the facts. But in the eleventh chapter, from verse 36, the portrait drawn, except in one feature, does not resemble Antiochus. The only fair conclusion is that he is there describing the Anti-christ. Antiochus, who is called the "vile person," was the king of the North, that is Syria. He overcame the king of the south, that is, Egypt. But the Anti-christ, mentioned in verse 36, in his day, is to overcome the king of the North, and therefore, he himself is not king of the North. From Dan. xi. 36, and onwards, S. Jerome tells us that the Jews thought that the "Anti-christ is spoken of. But Jerome believed that the Anti-christ had, as a type of himself, that most evil king Antiochus, who persecuted the saints and profaned the temple." Indeed, both Antiochus and Alexander may be regarded as types of "the man of sin," though they differed widely in their dispositions. Alexander was mild and attractive; Antiochus was furious and terrible. The former sets forth in some degree the early part of the history of the Anti-christ; the latter foreshadows his character during the 1260 days.

When Persia was conquered by the first king who reigned in Greece, that empire or dominion came to an end; and after the rule of the Greeks, the kingdom fell into the hands of the Romans. But there is still

a kingdom of Persia, and there is a kingdom of Greece; but they have lost universal dominion.

The fourth empire was the Roman. To this reference is made in Dan. vii. under the figure of the fourth beast, which is represented as “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.” This fourth beast, or the fourth empire, which is doubtless Rome, was characterized by overwhelming power. And how true this representation has proved, both in respect of Pagan Rome and Papal Rome, but especially the latter. J. B. Newton says, “The physical existence of men and of nations is limited. It may be very brief. But if they have laid the foundations of governmental systems—if they leave behind them, laws and institutions, which penetrate successive ages, and abidingly affect human life—then, when viewed in connexion with this prolonged and lasting influence, they are regarded as if still existent. The legislative and governmental systems of Chaldæa, infused a certain character into those of Persia; Persia, in her turn, acted upon Greece; and Greece upon Rome. Chaldæa, therefore, Persia and Greece lived on in Rome, and Rome will live again in the ten last kingdoms.” He further says, “The final sub-division into the ten kingdoms, denoted by the ten *toes*, is an event which will almost immediately precede the end, and will probably be contemporaneous with the national establishment of unbelieving Israel in their own land. The rise of him to whom the ten kingdoms give their power soon follows; and then the end will come.”

It is thought by some that the great red dragon mentioned in Rev. xii. 3, represents the Roman empire; but this is not admissible, as the ninth verse calls him "the devil and satan." Still, the description of the dragon corresponds with the features of the Roman empire, "having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads seven diadems." The wicked world is in alliance with satan, and he has long made use of earthly power; and he will again, at the close of this dispensation, in a yet more terrible manner, make use of earthly power, in opposing the Son of God and his chosen people.

The Roman empire, ceasing to exist in its once firm unity, was broken up into different kingdoms. After the rule of the Romans, the Saracens and the Turks became the possessors of Palestine. And the waning of the Turkish power is operating indirectly in favour of the Jewish people again establishing themselves in Jerusalem. The fourth monarchy is existing in our day in a divided form. And it is at the end of this empire, after its division into ten kingdoms, that a kingdom is to be set up that shall be under the whole heaven, and that shall continue for ever. It is indeed true that Charlemagne, Charles V., and Napoleon Bonaparte tried to raise a fifth universal monarchy, but they tried in vain. It is when the fourth empire is very near its end, that the desolater, in league with the ten kings, and their ungodly allies, show their deep hatred to Christ, by making war against Him when He returns to take possession of the kingdom of the world.

XII.

THE PAPACY NOT THE ANTI-CHRIST.

We think that many writers make a great mistake in supposing that the Papacy is to be understood by the Anti-christ. If plain statements of Holy Scripture, respecting "the man of sin," are compared with well known facts respecting the Papacy, we see not how this mistake can be made. While all the popes may be so many anti-christs, as they have all, more or less, usurped the authority of Christ, and practically denied His name, yet they are not *the* Anti-christ of the last days as set forth in the word of God. There are some things asserted of this great enemy of Christ and His people that are not true of the Papacy, bad and wicked as that system is. The Papacy cannot be the Anti-christ for these reasons:—1. The Anti-christ is to exercise his power in Palestine; but the Holy Land has never been occupied by the Papacy, and there is no evidence that it ever will be. 2. The Anti-christ will have "given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation;" but this was never true of any of the Popes, and it never will be. 3. It is declared that the whole earth shall wonder after the Anti-christ, or the beast, as he is called in the Revelation; but this was never true of any of the Popes during the 1260 years that the Papacy has existed. 4. The Anti-christ, or the man of sin, is to sit in the temple, or sanctuary of God, and make himself an object of worship, not constitute other things objects of worship, but manifesting himself as God, and lifting himself higher than any other object of worship, or any one who is called God; but it

cannot be proved that the Pope has committed this blasphemy. 5. It is said that he "shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished;" but the Papacy as a world-power has been waning for many years; nay, as a temporal power, in the proper sense of the word, it has long since ceased to exist. 6. "All that dwell on the earth shall worship" the Anti-christ, whose names have "not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world;" but this never has been, and never will be, true of the Papacy. 7. The apostle John, in his second epistle, ver. 7, teaches that the Anti-christ is he who confesseth not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh; but every Roman Catholic confesseth that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. Romanism then cannot be the Anti-christ. 8. It is said that the whore of Babylon symbolizes the Papacy, and that the beast symbolizes the Papacy; that the one is the same great enemy of God and his saints as the other. They are declared to be identical. Yet Scripture teaching is the exact opposite of this. Rev. xvii. teaches plainly that the beast, with the ten kings, shall hate and utterly destroy the harlot. If the beast destroys the harlot, it is impossible for him to be the same as that which he hates and destroys. 9. It is said that "he shall destroy the mighty and the holy people." This phrase has special reference to the Jews, and is an argument against the Papacy being the Anti-christ; for the Papacy has destroyed vastly more Christians than Jews. 10. It is in the *latter time* of the fourth kingdom, when it is divided into ten kingdoms,—it is when the transgressors are come to the full, that the Anti-christ is to arise, accord-

ing to Dan. viii. 23 ; but if the Papacy is the Anti-christ, he arose in the *early* part of the kingdom, not the latter. 11. When what was once the Roman empire is divided into ten kingdoms, the Anti-christ, or the little horn as Daniel calls him, is to subdue three,—utterly supplant them, and then get all the others under his control. But we maintain that the Pope has not done this. 12. According to Dan. xii. 1, Israel, Daniel's people, are to be delivered at the unparalleled time of trouble. They are *not yet delivered* ; therefore that time is not past ; it is still in the future. But the Anti-christ exists, and reigns, and makes war with the saints during that time of trouble ; therefore, the Papacy is not the Anti-christ, for the reign and terrible persecution of the Papacy are now a thing of the past. Besides, when Israel are delivered,—delivered from their sufferings in the unparalleled time of trouble,—it is Christ who comes to their deliverance. But when Christ comes to their deliverance, His glorified saints come with him : therefore, His sleeping saints must have been raised from the dead, and His living saints must have been transplanted, before that time of trouble. But if by that time of trouble is meant the reign of the Papacy, then His saints have already passed through it. 13. The Anti-christ will have power to work miracles, real miracles, stupendous miracles ; but neither the popes, nor the bishops, nor the papal clergy have ever wrought miracles ; all their miracles have been false pretences and lying cheats. 14. The whole construction, and the whole reasoning, and also the plain grammatical sense of 2 Thes. ii. 1-8, would lead us to conclude that it is when the Anti-christ is revealed that the Lord slays him ; that his destruction follows shortly

after, or immediately after, his revelation ; but if the Papacy is the Anti-christ, his destruction is an event nearly 1300 years, at least, after his revelation. On this subject we cannot do better than give a quotation from Mr. Newton. He says, " We might ask how, if the ten horned beast represent the Pope (who is ecclesiastical) *another* beast, also ecclesiastical in character, is in the same chapter (Rev. xiii.) said to minister in his presence, and what the image is, which speaks and is worshipped, and commands that whosoever will not worship it should be killed. Has the world ever yet seen such an image ? We might ask how a beast, which wears throughout the whole of the 1260 days the crowns of *all* the kingdoms of the Roman world, can represent the Pope, who has never worn these crowns ? and how, if the harlot represents the Papacy, can she be destroyed by the ten horns of the beast (Rev. xvii. 16, 17), who is supposed to represent the Pope ? How is it that during the whole of the 1260 days, the beast is represented as having authority in the holy city, even "the city where our Lord was crucified," (see Rev. xi. 7, 8), whereas the Pope had never exercised authority in Jerusalem at all ? How can it be, that all who shall worship the beast or receive his mark, are certainly doomed to everlasting wrath (Rev. xiv. 9), whereas it is possible for Papists to believe, and be saved ? Many a question of this kind might be multiplied, difficult indeed to be answered by those who seem to speak, as if all evil were concentrated in the Pope alone."

The point we are now aiming to show is confirmed and strengthened by Dean Alford, in his introduction to the Thessalonians, in some remarks on the 2nd chapter of the

2nd epistle, with special reference to the Anti-christ, or the man of sin. "On looking onward," he says, "to the next great class of interpretations, that which makes the man of sin to be the *Papal power*, it cannot be doubted, that there are many and striking points of correspondence with the language of the prophecy in the acts and professions of those who have successively held that power. But on the other hand it cannot be disguised that, in several important particulars, the prophetic requirements are very far from being fulfilled. I will only mention two, one subjective, the other objective. In the characteristic of ver. 4, the Pope does not and never did fulfil the prophecy. Allowing all the striking coincidences with the latter part of the verse which have been so abundantly adduced, it never can be shown that he fulfils the former part, nay so far is he from it, that the abject adoration of and submission to "*those which are called gods*" and "*objects of worship*," has ever been one of his most notable peculiarities. The second objection, of an external and historical character, is even more decisive. If the Papacy be Anti-christ, then has the manifestation been made, and endured now for nearly 1500 years, and yet that day of the Lord is not come, which by the terms of our prophecy such manifestation is immediately to precede."

Again; those who believe that the Papacy is the Anti-christ, have to speak of his destruction in a way which the Scriptures do not. In speaking of 2 Thess. ii. 8, Robert Fleming says, "For though the Lord will gradually consume or waste this great adversary by the spirit of his mouth, yet He will not sooner abolish him than by the appearing of His own presence." Mr. Henry says, "The

pure word of God accompanied by the Spirit of God, will discover this mystery of iniquity, and make the power of Anti-christ to consume and waste away; and in due time it shall be totally and finally destroyed, and this will be by the brightness of Christ's coming." The explanation of Joseph Sutcliffe on this passage is as follows:—"Anti-christ, whom He (Christ) will gradually consume by republishing the pure gospel, and totally destroy by the vengeance of his appearing." The following is the comment of Dr. William Jenks:—"The consuming of him precedes his final destruction, and that is by the pure word of God, accompanied with the Spirit of God." Now each of these writers holds the same idea, the gradual wasting away of the power of the Anti-christ. But where is this found in Scripture? We affirm that it has not a single passage on which to rest. Those who regard the Papacy as the Anti-christ are compelled by that theory to speak of a gradual consuming by the preaching of the gospel prior to his utter destruction at the coming of Jesus. But the Scriptures no where speak of his being gradually wasted; on the contrary, they represent him as being in full power up to the very hour of his punishment. The apostle John represents him, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, being gathered together to make war against the Lord, and against his army, the glorified saints who accompany Him to the earth when the Lord casts him "alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone." (Rev. xix. 19, 20.) When men are blinded by a system, it would seem as if they were unable to see the most plainly revealed truths. It is when the Anti-christ is revealed, when he is known as "the man of sin," and is engaged in blaspheming and opposing the

Son of God, and, with his numerous allies, is making war against Him, that his destruction is effected. There is nothing about his being gradually wasted. These arguments, then, these truths and facts, completely overturn the theory that the Papacy is the Anti-christ. Neither the system of Popery, nor any other system, answers to the descriptions given in the prophetic Scriptures of the last great desolater.

XIII.

THE GREAT HARLOT THAT SITTETH UPON MANY WATERS.

REV. xvii. 1: "I will show thee the judgment of the great harlot that sitteth upon many waters." The word harlot is frequently used in Scripture to represent an apostate church, a people who have backslidden from God and set their affections on other objects; but it does not appear to be so used in this chapter, though we may accommodate it to that sense if we wish to describe a people who have forsaken God. The 18th verse tells us plainly the sense in which it is used here. "And the woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth (hath a kingdom) over the kings of the earth." And the 10th verse of the 18th chapter tells us that that great city is Babylon. "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! for in one hour is thy judgment come." The great harlot, then, is the great city of Babylon, or in other words, the great head, or the one great power, that guides the combined powers. The kings of the earth are subject to that power. This view is further explained and confirmed by the latter part of ver. 1, "that sitteth upon many waters." We have not to speculate on the meaning

of this phrase. The angel gives John the meaning in these words : "The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." The word waters is used in Isaiah to represent the king of Assyria and his hostile armies. "Now, therefore, behold the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory ; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks."—Chap. viii. 7.

Verse 3: "And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." The beast represents united kingdoms, and the woman the head that guides them. In verses 9, 10, the angel gives an explanation of the seven heads. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth : and they are seven kings ; the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come ; and when he cometh, he must continue a little while." Evidently the beast stands for united kingdoms, all under the Babylonian power; these kingdoms are represented by the mountains ; the kings who are over them are represented by the seven heads ; and Babylon, which is meant by the harlot, is over the whole. The beast carries the harlot. That is, she guides these kingdoms or powers ; they are subject to her control. It is strange when a theory is once built up and propagated and men embrace it, how Scripture is perverted in its support. Because Rome is built on seven hills, and this woman is said to sit on seven mountains, the harmony of the language and symbols is broken, and the woman is interpreted figuratively, and the seven mountains are interpreted literally. The woman is said to symbolize Papal Rome,

and the seven mountains are said to be the seven literal hills on which the literal city is built, and where the harlot exercises her authority. And this is done in direct opposition to the teaching of the angel in these very passages. It is impossible that one part of the angel's explanation should contradict another part. But the interpretation alluded to, and which is so often given, does make the angel contradict himself. In verse 15, that upon which the woman sitteth is symbolized by the word, waters; and the waters are said to be "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." And in verse 9, that upon which the woman sitteth is symbolized by the word, mountains; and as the next verse declares that the seven heads, which are seven kings, are seven mountains, it shows clearly, that mountains, the same as waters, represent "people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." We quoted Isaiah viii. 7, in evidence that not only in the Revelation, but elsewhere, the term waters was used to represent people; and we now refer to Ezek. xxxvi. 1., as one instance among others which we might give, in evidence that the term mountains is also used to represent people: "Also, thou Son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord." Surely we should allow the Holy Spirit to be His own interpreter on subjects where He has not only given us the word, but condescended to give us the interpretation also.

But in reference to the seven heads, or kings, or kingdoms, the angel says, "the five are fallen, the one is, the other is not yet come." The five fallen kingdoms we believe to be Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, and Greece. Remarking on the word *fallen* in connection with

these kings, Dean Alford says, "If I understand these five of individual successive kings, if I understand them of forms of government adopted and laid down on occasion, I can give no account of this verb; but if I understand them of forms of empire, one after another heading the anti-christian secular power, one after another violently overthrown and done away, I have this verb in its right place and appropriate sense. Egypt is fallen, the first head of the beast that persecuted God's people; Nineveh is fallen, the bloody city; Babylon is fallen, the great enemy of Israel; Persia is fallen; Grecia is fallen. Thus, and as it seems to me thus only, can we do justice to the expression." It may be said that Egypt, Persia, and Greece still exist. That is true, but they do not exist in the sense they once did; they have fallen from the dominion, or predominance, and power—the persecuting power—they once possessed.

After the statement of the angel in reference to five fallen kings, or kingdoms, he adds, "the *one is*, the other is not yet come." By the phrase, "the *one is*," he meant the Roman empire, for that was the one existing at the time the words were spoken. And as to the other which "is not yet come,"—which was not in existence in the days of John,—we are left to conjecture. We think, however, the Turkish empire, or the Mohammedan people, may be the seventh head. The period of its continuance, "a little while," as that term is used in Scripture, is not against this view, as it is used to denote what in ordinary language we should call a long period. We would not, without what appeared to us good reason, differ from so great an authority as Dean Alford; but we cannot agree with him "in regarding this seventh as the *Christian empire* begin-

ing with Constantine : during whose time, the beast in his proper essence, in his fulness of opposition to God and His saints, ceases to be." This idea is quite incongruous, we think, with the teaching and sense of the entire chapter. Besides, the whole vision relates, not to the period when Constantine reigned and Christianity was joined to the state, but to the last days.

Verse 8 : "The beast that thou sawest *was*, and is *not*; and is *about to come up out of the abyss*." This was true of the Babylonian power when the seer had this vision and wrote it for our instruction. It had existed, but was not existing then. He could not refer to the Roman empire, for that existed when he wrote, and has continued to exist, though in a divided form. We conclude then that the beast that was not in John's day, but which had been, and which shall be again in the time of the end, is the Babylonian power. But as very few writers on prophecy admit this, we will here dwell upon it a little, and give some reasons for our belief that Babylon will again exist.

Babylon we think must be rebuilt before the following prophecy can be fulfilled : "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and become like the chaff of the summer threshing floors ; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them."—Dan. ii. 34, 35. This teaches that the image's head which was of fine gold, and which represents the Babylonian kingdom, will be broken to pieces together with the other parts of the image, by the stone cut out without hands

which shall smite the image. The stone doubtless represents Christ. But the Babylonian empire, to be broken up with the other empires, represented by the lower part of the image, must be in existence in the time of the end.

The great image in *all its parts* symbolized Gentile power in its several phases as it was to exist until the end. And it is true that the elements of each phase as it passed away lived on in the next phase. Some, therefore, conclude as the first phase will manifest itself more or less in the last, that the head of the image may thus be said to be broken when the feet are smitten. But this does not agree with the word, which says that the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold were *broken to pieces together*.

Again; at the fall of Babylon, narrated in Rev. xviii., it is said that "the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more." "And every shipmaster, and every one that saileth any whither, and mariners, and as many as gain their living by sea, stood afar off, and cried out as they looked upon the smoke of her burning, saying, what city is like the great city? And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and mourning, saying, woe, woe, the great city, wherein were made rich all that had their ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her."—Verse 17-20. These passages, as well as others not quoted, show that Babylon is a great centre of commercial and maritime operations, which cannot be said of Papal Rome. We see not how this lamentation can be interpreted consistently either applied to the material

city of Rome, or Papal Rome. It is not applicable in respect to the literal city, for it was never noted for its extensive business, and on account of its situation is never likely to be thus noted. And what application can this have to the ecclesiastical system of Rome? There is no correspondence between the language of this lamentation and Rome, if regarded as an ecclesiastical structure.

But further: When John saw the beast,—the beast that symbolizes the last form of Gentile power previous to the Lord's coming,—he saw him having the principal features of the previous three. He was “like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion.” Now it is the head that guides the body, and if the beast had the mouth of a lion, we presume he had the head of a lion; and this corresponds with the head of the great image, already referred to. And the head of the image cannot be broken with the other parts of the body unless it exists with them when they are broken. Hence we conclude that Babylon must come up again as the head to lead. It seems necessary to fulfil prophecy.

All the four beasts will exist at the time to which the prophecy points in the future, but not, of course, as they once existed. Each existed in its turn as a universal empire, or almost as a universal empire. When Babylon existed, it was supreme, and held general sway; but when the Babylonian kingdom was subdued, the Medo-Persian kingdom swallowed it up. And when the Medo-Persian kingdom was subdued, the Grecian kingdom swallowed it up. And when the Grecian was subdued, the Roman kingdom swallowed it up. Now as the principles of the first beast lived on in the second, and the principles of the second

continued to exist in the third, and so on to the end, there are some who think that the previous beast cannot be said to exist in the end only in that sense. But there is evidence that all will exist in the closing days of the age. It is well known that Alexander's empire was divided after his death. His four leading generals, Ptolemy, Antigonus, Lysimachus, and Cassander, became kings over Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Greece.

And the Roman empire after a few centuries was divided ; and at the last it exists divided up under ten kings ; and the eleventh that comes into notice is the man of sin. The fourth will not swallow up previous empires. And Persia and Greece exist to-day, and so must Babylon as well as Rome, to fulfil prophecy. After speaking of the four beasts, and of the judgment on the little horn, Daniel says, "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away : yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time."—Dan. vii. 12. This shows that all the empires exist till Christ supplants them with His own universal kingdom.

In Isa. xiv., there is an unmistakable reference to the Anti-christ. Many things are said of him, clearly pointing out who is meant. The portraiture is so plainly drawn that no unbiassed mind can mistake it. Yet he is there called "the king of Babylon," which further establishes the point in hand.

Rev. xvii. 11-13, 16, 17 : "And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven ; and he goeth into perdition. And the ten horns that thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet ; but they receive authority as kings, with the beast,

for one hour. These have one mind, and they give their power and authority unto the beast And the ten horns which thou sawest, and the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her utterly with fire. For God did put in their hearts to do his mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God should be accomplished." We learn here that the ten kings give their power to the beast. They unite with him in his design ; they are one in their diabolical plans. They were not existing when John wrote, but they are to rise up in the same period as the beast, and have kingly authority in the same period,—that is, in the closing days of the age. Now this beast that is of the seven, and is himself an eighth, and these ten kings, all in union, destroy the head, the great city represented by the harlot ; that is, the one great leading power of Babylon that guides the powers under her control. To illustrate : it is as if the governing power of London was hated by the English people and by the other nations or peoples that it governs, and they rise up, with one great leader, and other subordinate leaders, all in union, and destroy that governing power. Now the beast does not count as one among the seven, or as one included in the seven, but he is "*of* the seven ;" he rises up among them, and possesses in himself all their evil qualities, all their qualifications to rule and to destroy ; he embodies all the elements of the seven, but is himself an eighth. This is the little horn that Daniel saw in his vision that came up among the ten horns, or that rose up after them, and who shall speak great words against the most High. He it is who, with those in

alliance with him, shall war against the Lamb, as seen in verse 14, which also shows the result of their wickedness and madness.

XIV.

THE DESIGN OF THE ANTI-CHRIST.

THE design of the Anti-christ will be to turn men from the worship of the true God, to the worship of himself. He will endeavour to plunge the whole world into idolatry. Men will make an image to the beast, or "the man of sin," and the beast who comes up out of the earth, and acts as the agent of the first beast, will have power to give breath to the image, "that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed."—Rev. xiii. 15. In Matt. xxiv. 15, 16, Christ forewarns them of an idol which shall be set up in the temple, and which shall be the means of causing waste and desolation among the people. He refers to Dan. xii. 11, where it is foretold "that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up." Some fall into a mistake here and suppose that Christ referred to Daniel xi. 31. But "the abomination that maketh desolate" of Dan. xi. 31, was placed in the sanctuary by Antiochus, during the terrible persecution of the Jews, which he commanded, and which took place 168 years before the time of Christ; that referred to by Christ shall be set up by "the king," the Anti-christ. "When therefore," says He, "ye see the abomination of desolation,

which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let him that readeth understand), then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains." The design of this exhortation to flee to the mountains, seems to be to save them from the necessity of falling into idolatry, or falling victims to the malice and rage of the Anti-christ.

In Rev. xiii. 11-18, we have a reference to the extraordinary miracles that shall be wrought by satanic power in the last times, so as to deceive the people and lead them to deny the true faith. We have also a further reference to them in Rev. xvi. 13, 14, which we will quote. "And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits, as it were frogs: for they are spirits of devils, working signs; which go forth unto the kings of the whole world, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." But while Satan and his servants are doing their utmost to ruin the world, is God unconcerned as to what is going on? We cannot entertain such a thought. After this prediction there follows a warning, "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth; and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Verse 15. Let christians beware. Let them not be deceived although miracles the most astounding may be wrought before their eyes. The word of God forwarns us against these things. The devil will make a most mighty and tremendous effort to turn men from faith in Jesus to faith in the false Christ. The gospel of Matthew also contains a solemn caution on this subject from the lips of our Lord. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is the Christ, or, Here, believe

it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. Behold, I have told you beforehand. If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness; go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe it not."—Matt. xxiv. 23-26. From this it would seem that the elect,—the converted and believing Jews, and the sincere and full-hearted disciples of Jesus from among the Gentiles, who will be passing through the great tribulation, those who by faith will be in union with God,—cannot be led astray; but does it not imply that the rest of mankind will be led astray? And among those subjects of deception and error, may there not be many half-hearted, worldly-minded christians?

XV.

THE TIME OF TROUBLE.

THE prophet Jeremiah refers to this unparalleled time of trouble, and also to Israel's salvation from it, in the following words: "For thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day,

saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him.”—Jer. xxx. 5—8.

Daniel, in his prophecies, treats of Jehovah’s indignation upon Israel, which is to come upon them through the Gentile nations; but clear reference is made to the end of that indignation in two passages of the eighth chapter. “Understand, O son of man; for *at the time of the end* shall be the vision. . . . Behold, I will make thee know what shall be in the *last end of the indignation*; for at the time appointed the *end* shall be.” Verses 17, 19. That end will not come until the last Gentile king shall have played his part. When the indignation has ceased, favour and blessing shall take its place.

In Dan. xii. 1, the prophet also predicts this time of trouble. “And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”

To this same period of trouble Christ also refers in Matt. xxiv. 21, 22, and calls it the great tribulation. “For then shall be great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days had been shortened, no flesh would have been saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” It has been well remarked that “there cannot be two *unequalled* seasons of tribulation.”

From Rev. xiv. 6, 7, we learn that a wonderful pro-

clamation of the Gospel will be made just previous to this awful persecution by the Anti-christ. "And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give Him glory; for the hour of His judgment is come."

It is true that in the present signs of the times there are some things to encourage hope, but there are not a few to call forth fear. Even now there are forebodings that the saints of the future will be called to endure troubles such as some little dream of. But it will be well with the faithful. Those who adhere to truth and purity, who strengthen their faith in Christ, will have the divine power to protect, and the divine presence to comfort them. It will be the coming of the Lord that will put an end to the troubles and sorrows of His faithful people. The following passage contains a trumpet call for such to separate themselves from the Lord's enemies:—"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."—Rev. xviii. 4. This is a command to come out of Babylon. The state of things which the prophet saw in vision will soon exist, and the passage will then have its primary application. But while in Scripture history Babylon means the ancient city in Chaldea, and in Scripture prophecy the great city yet to be rebuilt, we may here make an application of it to a state of things often treated of in the word of God. Babylon, in its original signification, means confusion, or mixture. We often, therefore, use it

symbolically for Rome ecclesiastical, or any other system that to a greater or less degree manifests the same spirit or principle.

Associated with Babylon you have always these ideas,— pride, self-exaltation, idolatry and corruption ; and these things are always the most hateful to God when practised under the cloak of Christianity. To unite the world with the church, to assume the Christian name and not depart from iniquity, to use Christianity as a stepping stone to power, or honour, or wealth ; and that these ends may be the better gained, to add to or take from the word of God, and thus pervert the true doctrine, is the very principle, the very element of Babylon.

In the past, when God has been about to manifest Himself in judgment, not only has the evil one been at work, but the Spirit of God also has worked. While wickedness has been bold and daring, and unbelief and impiety have spread, a few of the Lord's faithful witnesses have striven together for the faith of the gospel, and the conversion of men to Christ ; and ere the judgments have come, some have thereby taken warning and prepared themselves for the storm. And thus it will be again in the terrible judgments that will soon fall upon the world. Satan, boiling over with enmity against the Son of God, is doing all he can to oppose Him, and to turn men from Him, and many are fast filling up the cup of their iniquity ; but the trumpets are sounding, and divine warnings are being given, and many are seeking refuge in Christ, a place of shelter ere the dreadful day of the Lord shall begin.

The saints with whom war will be made by the beast (Rev. xiii. 7) will only be, some think, "the Jewish church,"

if, indeed, the saints of that period, after the church of this dispensation have been removed, may be called a church. But it says that "there was given to him authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation," which must include Gentiles. And doubtless Gentiles as well as Jews will belong to the church, or the saints of that period, but the Jews may form the large majority. The remnant of Judah who will then be found keeping the divine commands, and who are in some way referred to by the term woman in Rev. xii. will find shelter during the three years and a half. They are the seed of the woman. "The woman," says W. Kelly, "is the symbol of God's purpose as bound up with Israel." The apostle John represents the dragon, or Satan, the accuser of the brethren, as having great wrath against the woman and her seed, and he endeavours to destroy the remnant of her seed,—believing and obedient Israel. "And the serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the stream." Verse 15. This may be designed to set forth the fierceness of the dragon's wrath, his fury, and the depth and intensity of his enmity, and also the rage and malice of those in alliance with him, and who shall act under his power. The apostle further represents the woman as being assisted by the earth and as having a place of refuge in the wilderness. "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that there they may nourish her a thousand two hundred and three score days." "And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the river which the dragon cast out of his mouth." Verses 6, 16. This may be in

tended to set forth places of safety, away from the terrible scenes of strife and war and bloodshed, where the faithful remnant hide for a while.

Evidently to this period the following words refer:—“Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.”—Isa. xxvi. 20, 21. This will be the language of God to the faithful Jews in that great time of trouble.

And in that day they will look to Him as their only Deliverer. How expressive is the following language for Millennial blessedness:—“For Zion’s sake, will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake, I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory.”—Isa. lxii. 1, 2.

XVI.

THE TWO WITNESSES.

NOTHING need be said to show that the two witnesses of Rev. xi. will be connected with the Jews who will have returned to Jerusalem a little while prior to the Lord’s coming. The enemies of Christ and His people will lay waste the holy city, and for forty-two months shall tread it under foot; shall walk through its streets with pride and

haughtiness as victors. But the Lord then shall have two, amid the daring lawlessness and open blasphemy, specially qualified and set apart as His witnesses. They "shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and three score days, clothed in sackcloth" (Rev. xi. 3,) the very same length of time during which the beast is permitted to do his works. The events referred to in connection with these witnesses are amplified in the 13th chapter; and looked at in the light of what is said there, we may understand them more correctly. These witnesses are *two* in number, which should be distinctly borne in mind, as we shall have to offer a remark on this presently. It is said that they shall prophesy. This doubtless means that they shall foretell the awful judgments that are impending, and warn men of their danger, and call upon them to repent. And they will continue their testimony for a given period, the period in which the beast reigns, and until the end thereof is accomplished. Their prophesying "clothed in sackcloth" may signify the terrible nature of the coming woes, the loud calling to weeping, and mourning, and lamentation, and the urgent need of an immediate and sincere acknowledgment of the most High God. It also indicates their own sense of responsibility and their deep humiliation. We may not tell exactly what is symbolized by the terms applied to the two witnesses in verse 4: "These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks (lampstands), standing before the Lord of the earth." But we think the oil in their lamps may signify the Holy Spirit, and the light shining from their lamps may signify the truths set forth in their prophecy. Indeed, there is scarcely room for doubt that this is the correct meaning. There is evidently a reference to Zech. iv. 4, 11, 14, some

of the language of which is here quoted. They are probably intended to set forth the fact that in the midst of the dense moral darkness which shall then prevail, God will have two great lights ; and their testimony shall proclaim the name and glory of God, and leave men without excuse for their rebellion. These will be the Lord's "two anointed ones," and they will stand by the Lord, and by His truth, and will confess Him openly before men.

And during the period of their testimony God will not suffer them to be hurt. He will give them mighty power, as He did to Moses and Elijah, so that none can prevail against them. "And if any man desireth to hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must he be killed. These have the power to shut the heaven, that it rain not during the days of their prophecy: and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to smite the earth with every plague, as often as they shall desire."—Rev. xi. 5, 6. We learn from 2 Kings i. 10—12, that Elijah had authority to call down fire from heaven ; and from Exd. ix. x. that Moses had authority to smite the Egyptians with plagues.

But when they have fulfilled their calling, or their mission,—when their testimony shall be finished, God will permit the beast to "make war with them and kill them. And their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified."—Rev. xi. 7, 8. Many think the city here called the "great city," is identical with the city in verse 2, called the "holy city." Some, however, offer reasons for concluding that it is not the same. Jerusalem,

they say, is nowhere designated the "great city," while Babylon *is* designated by that name. Then this great city is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt. This latter name, it is said, is never given to Jerusalem. Sodom is applied to it, or rather Jerusalem is likened to it on account of the wickedness of her people. Dean Alford is decidedly against the view that Jerusalem is meant. He thinks such an interpretation is forbidden by the context, and "that the literal Jerusalem, in whom was found the blood of all the saints who had been slain on earth, has been superseded by that wider and greater city, of which this prophecy speaks." He thinks it was "the general fact of death by persecution," and "not the specific term *crucifixion*," that was in John's mind. But the term, "where also their Lord was crucified," is so simple and definite, that it seems unmistakeably to identify the "great city" with Jerusalem. Besides, though this particular term is not anywhere else applied to Jerusalem, Jerusalem throughout the whole of Scripture is recognised as a great city.

After the witnesses are killed, there is extraordinary rejoicing among their enemies over what they think a great victory over these servants of God. "And from among the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations do men look upon their dead bodies three days and a half, and suffer not their dead bodies to be laid in a tomb. And they that dwell on the earth rejoice over them, and make merry; and they shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwell on the earth."—Verses 9, 10. It is by the plagues with which they have power to smite the earth that they are

said to have tormented men, but that power was only exercised when their testimony was opposed and their lives were threatened during the period of their testifying. But God puts upon them a mark of the highest possible honour. Testifying for Him, and suffering at last unto death for His sake, God raises them to life, and in the presence of their enemies, calls them up to heaven: “And after the three days and a half the breath of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which beheld them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they went up into heaven in the cloud; and their enemies beheld them.”—Verses 11, 12. Terrible judgments then followed, as will be seen from verso 13: “And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell; and there were killed in the earthquake seven thousand persons: and the rest were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.”

It may be asked, Who are these witnesses? This is a question which none can satisfactorily answer. We think, however, there can be little doubt but Elijah will be one. In Mal. iv. 5, it is said, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.” This prophecy is thought by some to have been fulfilled in John the Baptist; but evidently this is a mistake. It may have received a partial fulfilment, as John came “in the spirit and power of Elias;” but that it was not fulfilled literally, or fully, in John, is certain from these two considerations. 1. When John began to bear witness of Christ, a deputation of priests and Le-

vites was sent to him by the Jews, to make inquiries concerning him. "Who art thou?" they asked; "art thou Elijah?" The answer was short, but definite and conclusive. "I am not," he said. This should be enough, without any further remark. But, 2nd, the prophecy of Malachi refers exclusively to the Lord's second coming, to "the great and dreadful day of the Lord;" and John was the forerunner of Christ's first advent. We are aware that some insist that John the Baptist *was* Elijah, notwithstanding his own plain and positive denial of it, because Christ said, "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, which is to come." "And His disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah must first come? And He answered and said, Elijah indeed cometh, and shall restore all things: but I say unto you, that Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but did unto him whatsoever they listed. Even so shall the Son of man also suffer of them. Then understood the disciples that He spake unto them of John the Baptist."—Matt. xi. 13, 14; xvii. 10-13. Now we cannot suppose Christ and John the Baptist really contradict each other in a matter of fact like this. The solution of the apparent difficulty is easy. The angel of the Lord, speaking to Zacharias in reference to the birth of John and his work, says, "Fear not, Zacharias: because thy supplication is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

And many of the children of Israel shall he turn unto the Lord their God. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.”—Luke i. 13—17. Here we have the sense in which Christ said, “Elijah is come already.” To us it seems a mark of great stupidity that writers should insist that John the Baptist was actually Elijah in person. Had he been Elijah in person, he must have come down from heaven a full grown man; yet the evidence is undeniable that he was born into the world an infant. Dean Alford, in remarking on Matt. xi. 13, 14, says, “According to the declaration of prophecy itself John, in the spirit and power of Elias, was the forerunner of the great subject of all prophecy. Neither this—nor the testimony of our Lord, ch. xvii. 12—is inconsistent with John’s own denial that he was Elias, John i. 21. For (1) the question there was evidently asked as assuming a *re-appearance of the actual Elias upon earth*; and (2) our Lord cannot be understood in either of these passages as meaning that the prophecy Malachi iv. 5, received its *full completion* in John. For as in other prophecies, so in this, we have a partial fulfilment both of the coming of the Lord and of his forerunner, while the great and complete fulfilment is yet future—at the great day of the Lord, Mal. iv. 1.” John the Baptist, therefore, did not fulfil the prediction of Mal. iv. 5. Hence the reason is strong for believing that it will be fulfilled in the appearing of Elijah as one of the two witnesses just prior to that dreadful day. We are not aware that Scripture affords

any intimation as to who the other may be; though some think that Enoch may have that honour; but the time we believe is near which will declare it.

But notwithstanding the strong evidence, throughout the account of the two witnesses, of their individuality, some think it is all figurative. One writer, J. H. Paton, in his work called, "The Day Dawn," explains the two witnesses to represent the two Testaments, the Old and the New. Another writer, J. P. Weethee, in the *Restitution* for March 22, 1882, says the witnesses are churches, and churches are congregations of believers. They are as old as the church itself, and, therefore, must be a succession of saints, necessary to supply the removals by death. The 1260 days that the two witnesses are to prophesy, clothed in sackcloth, this writer interprets to "cover that space of time during which the nations, constituting the family of the fourth beast of Daniel, under the control of the Roman apostate hierarchy, trampled under foot the holy City." The holy City, he says, is the Christian Community.

Now if we are at liberty to interpret the word after this fashion, it seems to us that we may prove any thing we like from the word. Figures and symbols we know are sometimes used, and used very frequently in this book—the Revelation—but they are always used to represent something. And there is always consistency between the figures or symbols, and the things they represent, and what is said of them. But what consistency is there here on the principle of these writers? We are told the witnesses are churches, or congregations of believers; and they have been prophesying, according to J. P. Weethee, during the whole period of the Roman apostacy, for he says the 1260

days are 1260 years. But the prophecy says that if any man desire to hurt the witnesses during the period of their testimony, fire proceedeth out of their mouth and devoureth their enemies. By this phrase we understand that by the word of their mouth they will have power to call down judgments upon them. If the churches, or congregations of believers, for nearly 1300 years past, are these two witnesses, how is it that all through the period of their testimony they have suffered their enemies to put millions of their number to death, if all the while they had power and authority from heaven to kill any man who should desire to hurt them ? Mr. Weethee says the witnesses must be a succession of saints, necessary to supply the removals by death. John teaches that until the hour when they shall have finished their testimony, they will be superior to death. But Mr. Weethee's interpretation involves a terrible contradiction in principle between John and Christ. He holds that these witnesses are bodies of believers who have been prophesying all the way down through the ages of the Papal heresy. Christ teaches that believers are to love their enemies, and under no circumstances to harm them ; but John teaches that these witnesses will smite and kill their enemies during the whole period of their testimony. Now this of itself shows the year day theory to be false as applied to this period. It shows that this period is not the period during which the churches are called to testify. It shows that this period belongs to the end of the age when the body of Christ is completed, or is near its completion, and the man of sin is reigning, and Christ with his saints is about to come down in judgment. Whoever the witnesses are, nothing in the prophecy is

more clear than this, that they are neither to die a natural death, nor be killed, till the completion of the whole 1260 days of their testimony. The theory therefore that says the 1260 days are 1260 years, and that the witnesses are churches, or congregations of believers, destroys itself. The theory has neither Scripture, nor facts, nor common sense on its side. A number of questions might be asked, or objections stated, rising out of other particulars in this prophecy, all showing how inconsistent is any interpretation of the two witnesses which makes them represent entire bodies of individuals existing through a thousand two hundred and threescore years. Just two or three remarks more. If the two witnesses will be two men, there is propriety in the statement, "If *any man* shall desire to hurt them, in this manner must *he* be killed." But where would be the propriety of this statement, if the two witnesses represented congregations of believers throughout the world and throughout the ages? It is further said, "And when they shall have *finished* their testimony, the beast that cometh out of the abyss shall . . . kill them." It is not soon after they have begun their testimony, or when they are half through it, but when they shall have finished it. But how could this be made to apply to bodies of believers, vast numbers of whom have been martyred right down from the early ages while giving their testimony? Further, these two witnesses, as we have seen, are to keep testifying till they are killed by the beast; but there is to be a company of believers who will live and keep testifying till Jesus comes and transplants them. How is it possible, therefore, that these two slain witnesses can symbolize living assemblies of believers who are never

slain ? Yet further, if the 1260 days of their prophecy are 1260 years, then it follows that the three days and a half that they lie dead in the streets of the great city, are three years and a half ; and if these two witnesses are churches, it follows that churches, or congregations of believers, are to lie unburied in the streets for three years and a half. The mere mention of this shows the absurdity of the theory ; and our wonder is that men, who profess to follow Scripture, and who have any regard for their reputation as expositors of Scripture, can propagate such a theory.

XVII.

ESCAPE OF THE CHURCH FROM THE UNEQUALLED TIME OF TRIBULATION.

BRIEF allusions to this are made in several parts of this work, and already in section vii., in treating of the translation of the living saints, we have furnished some evidence of the above statement ; but the last two sections render it desirable that we should here make a few more remarks on the subject. A further evidence that the church does not pass through this terrible period, is found in the circumstances of the two witnesses just noticed as contrasted with those of the church. We have seen that the period of the testimony of these witnesses is the period of the unparalleled tribulation ; everything in the passages and in the context of the passages shows it to be the terrible crisis when the last great head of the Gentile power is reigning, and just before the Lord comes down to assert His right

and take the kingdom. Hence the miraculous power given to them during the days of their prophecy, even power to command fire to devour their enemies. To our mind this is proof of the translation of the church prior to this period, because there is nothing analogous to this during the period of the church's testimony. The two periods are altogether dissimilar. Under no circumstances now, no matter how fierce the persecution for righteousness' sake, could Christ's witnesses destroy their enemies. Christ's teachings in His sermon on the mount, and the teachings of all the epistles would have to be abrogated the present economy of grace and mercy would have to be entirely changed, ere those who testify for Christ and His truth can be permitted to use the power they have in killing those who oppose them. But in the coming crisis, as already shown from the word, God will give these two witnesses special power to kill any man who endeavours to hurt them during the 1260 days of their prophesying. Nothing can more strongly contrast the two periods, or show that the period of the testimony of these two witnesses is after the translation of the church.

In Luke xxi., beginning at the middle of verse 24, after predicting the desolation of Jerusalem, Christ foretells that it shall be trodden down until the completion of Gentile predominancy. Then after mentioning certain signs which shall precede His coming in a cloud, we are to rejoice when those signs begin to appear, because we shall know that redemption and the kingdom and restitution are near. Then follows an exhortation to avoid indulgence of the appetites, lest by being made heavy thereby, that day should come upon us unexpectedly, as it will come upon

men in general. Then follows further an exhortation to constant watchfulness and prayer that we “may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” These words are intended to apply particularly to those who shall be living when the signs which precede His appearing shall begin to transpire. But in what sense can they escape these things, if they pass through them? If they will pass through the unequalled tribulation, and be worn out, or put to death by the beast, how can they escape these calamities? These words of the Saviour we regard as proof that they will be freed from these things by translation. To our mind they show that the watching, prayerful, believing ones will not pass through that last period of trial.

We have in another place referred to Rev. iii. 10, and to the Lord’s promise to keep those from that hour of trial which is to come upon the whole inhabited earth, who keep the word of His patience. This hour of trial we believe to be identical with the great tribulation, and we believe that it covers the period referred to by the 1260 days. This is Dean Alford’s opinion, and he expresses himself as follows in regard to those interpreters who place it in the past:—“The expositors have in many cases gone away from this broad and obvious meaning here, and have sought to identify the *hour of temptation* with various periods of trial and persecution of the *church*: a line of interpretation carrying its own refutation with it in the very terms used in the text.”

In Rev. xix. the Lord is represented as coming, sitting upon a white horse—a symbol of power—and the armies of heaven are represented as following Him upon white horses,

clothed in fine linen, white and pure; and the fine linen, it says, is the righteous acts of the saints, thus showing that these armies are the saints,—the risen and glorified saints. The Anti-christ is represented, in association with the kings of the earth and their armies, as gathering together to make war against Christ and against His army. Then it is that the Anti-christ is taken and cast into the lake of fire. Now if the saints follow Christ from heaven, when He comes down to the earth to punish the Anti-christ and his armies, we cannot avoid the conclusion that the saints are called up to heaven prior to those judgments. This we think *must* be so beyond all question. We are indeed aware of one or two passages which, with our limited knowledge, are hard to be understood owing to a little obscurity in the language, which some regard as militating against this view; but as this view is sustained by such plainly revealed truth, nothing that is obscure should be allowed to set it aside.

Daniel, speaking of the little horn that came up among the ten, says, "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints."—Dan. vii. 21. This is thought by some to cover the whole period in which the church has suffered under the Papacy; but the context refutes this idea. Daniel is referring to the kingdom in its divided state; he is referring to it in its last state when it is under ten kings; and he then refers to another who shall rise up after them, and it is this one who is to make war with the saints. But the prophet here has no reference to the church, but to the saints among his own people. His prophecy is

written specially concerning the Jews ; and Gentile nations and their rulers are only taken notice of as they are connected with that people. Their sufferings under the beast, after gathered to their own land, will be great, and they will continue until their Messiah shall come. But the faithful will be richly rewarded for their faithfulness. They will lose nothing, but will be immense gainers by their adherence to the truth, even though they may suffer unto death.

XVIII.

THE DOOM OF THE ANTI-CHRIST AND HIS ALLIES.

THE Anti-christ and the false prophet use their power to persecute and slay as long as they can ; at last the awful crisis is reached ; these monster adversaries of God and man are arrested in their satanic work. Christ is about to take the government of the world into his own hands, and set up His glorious kingdom, and His glorified church are to reign with Him. And it seems as if He tarries till this stage so that the last who suffers death for the word of God and for their faithful witness, shall be raised again to share with the church in His glorious reign. For after John saw the beast and the false prophet cast alive into the lake of fire, and the devil bound and cast into the abyss, and after he saw thrones occupied by the saints, with power given them to judge the world, he says, " And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the

beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."—Rev. xx. 4. What consolation there is in these prophecies for those saints who will suffer death in the last bloody persecution after the rapture of the church. Their sufferings may be great, but they will be as nothing compared with the glory that shall follow. Their sufferings will last but for a little while, but they will reign with Christ a thousand years. Their sorrows will scarcely be remembered for the fulness of their joy.

But to return : after the Anti-christ has run his wicked course, the next great act in the coming of Christ will be his destruction. After the attack made upon the beast by the Euphratean armies, consequent upon the tidings out of the east and out of the north which trouble him, and the third part of men are killed, he will go forth with great fury to destroy ; and in the awful pride of his heart, he will "plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain ;" that is, between the Mediterranean sea and the Dead sea. At that moment he will no doubt think that he is sure of his prey ; for his armies will have been recruited by three unclean spirits, the spirits of devils, working signs, and going " forth unto the kings of the whole inhabited earth, to gather them together unto the war of the great day of God, the Almighty." And until all the rebels among the Jewish race are scourged, the lawless one, the leader of the nations, seems to be successful. They take Jerusalem, and force half of the people into bondage and divide the spoil. It seems to be at this point that the Lord and all His saints appear on the scene.

Oh, what a terrible hour that will be for the enemies of Jerusalem and for the enemies of the Lord. And drunk or mad with partial victory, and with hatred and fury against the Lord, they turn to make war against Him and His saints; but they are overcome, for who can withstand Jehovah. He speaks, and how terrible His utterance; He speaks, and by the word of His mouth He smites the armies of the nations. He speaks, and it is done; His enemies are confounded, bewildered, smitten, destroyed. The beast will be seized while actually engaged in fighting against the people of Israel, and his punishment will be dreadful, as we have just seen from the passage quoted from the Revelation. The same is evident from Paul's words: "Whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming."—2 Thess. ii. 8. The prophet Daniel alludes to the punishment of the Anti-christ in the following passage:—"I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."—Dan. vii. 11.

And with the punishment of the Anti-christ will take place the punishment of those rebels who have been united with him in his evil work of opposition to God and the elect of God. But let it be observed, it will be the punishment, as far as we can learn from the Book, simply of those who are then alive as active agents in the great apostacy, and persecutors of the saints.

This will be a terrible judgment, a judgment in which the wicked, as tares, will be burned up; but the righteous shall escape; as wheat they shall be gathered into the

the barn ; they shall dwell in the land ; they shall be spared because of their faithfulness. And they will form the first members of the Millennial kingdom.

XIX.

THE TERRIBLE INSTRUMENTS OF THEIR DESTRUCTION.

WHEN the Anti-christ and his allies shall be judged and punished, various and terrible instruments of destruction shall be used at the battle of that great day of God. There shall be a great earthquake ; there shall be the sword and the pestilence, and there shall be hailstones, and fire, and brimstone. This will be seen from the following passages :—" And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel ; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God : every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood ; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the

many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone."—Ezek. xxxviii. 18-22 "And the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley ; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains ; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal ; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah ; and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee.

. . . . And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem ; their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouth."—Zech. xiv. 4, 5, 12. "And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood ; and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her unripe figs, when she is shaken of a great wind. And the heaven was removed as a scroll when it is rolled up ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places." "And they gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon. And the seventh poured out his bowl upon the air ; and there came forth a great voice out of the temple, from the throne, saying, It is done : and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders ; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since there were men upon the earth, so great an

earthquake, so mighty. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations: and Babylon the great was remembered in the sight of God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And great hail, every stone about the weight of a talent, cometh down out of heaven upon men; and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof is exceeding great."—Rev. vi. 12—14; xvi. 16—21. This will be the scene of the terrible display of the Lamb's wrath, and where the last and decisive battle will be fought. It is further said in chap. xiv. 19, 20, "And the angel cast his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vintage of the earth, and cast it into the winepress, the great winepress, of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and there came out blood from the winepress, even unto the bridles of the horses, as far as a thousand and six hundred furlongs." Thus the land of Palestine will flow with blood from end to end; it will cover some 200 miles, or, according to the passage, 1600 furlongs. From Zech. xii. 4, as well as from one passage just quoted from Ezekiel, it is also evident that there will be strife and confusion in the army of the Anti-christ, which will hasten their defeat. "In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness." We may also learn something of the fearful extent of the slaughter of that dreadful battle from the following Scriptures:—"For the indignation of the Lord is upon all

nations, and His fury upon all their armies ; he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood." "I have trodden the winepress alone ; and of the people there was none with me : for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury ; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help ; and I wondered that there was none to uphold : therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me ; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth."—Isa. xxxiv. 2, 3 ; lxiii. 3-6. According to these passages there will be terrible scenes of bloodshedding and destruction.

When Jerusalem was conquered and trodden down in the first century, it was the Roman army that did it ; but this last great battle that shall be fought against Jerusalem shall be by all nations. In their defeat by the Romans, the whole nation of the Jews were scattered ; but in the last battle it is prophesied that only "half of the people" shall "go forth into captivity," and the remainder will continue in the city ; and the final result of the battle will be the full deliverance of the Jewish nation from Gentile oppression.

The prophet Isaiah, in chap. xiv., has some striking predictions of the Anti-christ in connection with the latter days, with the period when "the whole earth is at rest,

and is quiet," which expression is evidence that he refers to the period following his destruction. He is called "the king of Babylon," "the oppressor," "Lucifer, son of the morning," "the Assyrian," and is said to smite the people in wrath with a continual stroke, to rule the nations in anger, to make the earth to tremble, to shake the kingdoms, to make the world as a wilderness, and destroy the cities thereof. And when Israel shall have rest from their sorrow, and from their fear, and from the hard bondage in which they have been made to serve, they are to take up a song of rejoicing against the wicked king, part of which runs thus:—"How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers." "Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us." Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming." "How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shall be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house."—Verses 12-18. This picture of the Anti-

christ is too much like the picture drawn in other parts of prophecy, to be mistaken by those who are unbiassed in their minds. He is also to have no burial, (verse 20), which agrees with the manner of his end as given by Daniel and John.

And there is evidence that this description of the prophet cannot refer to king Nebuchadnezzar, or to those that followed him. Goodwyn says, "Neither Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, nor Belshazzar, can be recognised as having acted like this fallen star of day. The first was by the power of God brought to acknowledge him; the others were not personally concerned with Jerusalem at all." Besides, Israel's triumph over this wicked king of Babylon is, according to this chapter, when they are set in their own land, and they shall rule over their oppressors, and the whole earth is at rest, and is quiet, and they shall see their enemy brought down, and see him left without burial. Surely this is proof enough that it is yet future.

XX.

THE JUDGMENT OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS.

THIS judgment and punishment of those concerned in the apostacy, and who have upon them the mark of the beast, Christ sets forth in His parable of the sheep and the goats in the 25th chapter of Matthew. " When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations: and he shall separate

them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Verses 31-32. We will not quote the whole because of its length, but our Lord's description of this judgment is familiar to all readers of the word. Now this judgment is not, we think, the last judgment, as the translators of King James's Version put it as the heading of this part of the chapter: the last judgment we believe to be that which is portrayed by John the divine in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation. The judgment there described by John will be the judgment of the raised dead; no mention is made of the living. The judgment described by our Lord will be the judgment of the living; no reference is made in that parable to the dead, whether good or bad. It is a judgment of the *nations*, but the dead are never called by any such term. Out of more than one hundred and fifty passages where this term is used in the Christian Scriptures, we have not a single instance in which it refers to the dead, or those raised from the dead. If this judgment included the judgment of the dead, we may presume since so many particulars are given, that the resurrection would have been referred to. It is certain that to conclude it has a reference to the dead as well as to the living, is to assume that for which the passage affords no evidence. At the judgment set forth by John, only those will be accepted who will be found written in the book of life. At the judgment set forth in the parable, the sheep are to be rewarded in consideration of certain beneficent acts done to our Lord's afflicted saints, or His brethren according to the flesh, the Jews. The reasons for the justification of the one class

and the condemnation of the other are such as could have no application to a large proportion of the whole race of mankind. The test is one which could not be applied but to a few comparatively of all that ever lived in China, in Japan, in Africa, and other heathen countries. They have both lived and died without a knowledge either of Christ or His kindred according to the flesh. Then the judgment to which John refers is to take place very shortly after the close of the Millennium; but the judgment to which Christ refers is to take place when He comes in His glory, and sits upon the throne of His glory, at the setting up of His kingdom at the commencement of the Millennium. But further, the judgment delineated in Rev. xx., is not on the earth, which is proved by the context; but the judgment depicted in Matt. xxv., takes place when He comes to Mount Zion, which proves that it will be on the earth.

A considerable time since writing the above, we found these views fully confirmed in a work we had not previously met with. The author of "Plain Papers" says, "As to the subjects of the judgment, Matt. xxv. speaks only of *the living*; Rev. xx. only of *the dead*. 'Before him shall be gathered *all nations*,' is the language of the one, 'And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God,' is that of the other. Assiduous efforts are made to show that "all nations" includes the dead of all generations, and that "the dead, small and great," absolutely means all mankind. But the expression rendered "all nations," literally rendered, is "all the Gentiles." The word rendered "nations, with the article, occurs, if we mistake not, 132 times in the New Testament. It is rendered "the Gentiles" ninety-two times—"the nations" ten times—"the heathen" five times

—and simply “nations” twenty-five times only; but it is never, in any instance, (unless it be this), applied either to the dead or the raised. The very expression indicates a present existence and locality upon earth. Nor is there any mention in the passage, of “the opening of the graves,” or “the sea giving up its dead,” or any reference whatever to resurrection. It is the judgment of the Gentiles at the coming of Christ. Nor could anything be in more perfect keeping with the whole discourse.—Chap. xxiv. 15-41 gives the judgment of Israel; xxiv. 42 to xxv. 30, the judgment of Christendom; xxv. 31-46, the judgment of the Gentiles.”

The judgment, then, described in this parable will be, we think, of the living only, and will commence at the close of the apostacy. This view agrees with various prophecies which seem to portray the same judgment. It will be the judgment of the Gentile nations, with a special reference to their conduct to Christ’s persecuted people during the reign of the Anti-christ. Doubtless it is the judgment to which particular reference is made by the prophet Joel. “Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord. Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehosaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw

their shining. The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain: then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more." —Joel iii. 11-17. Har-Magedon, mentioned in Rev. xvi. and the valley of Jehosophat, and the valley of decision, mentioned here, evidently refer to the same place.

In Rev. xix. 11-15, it is taught that the armies in heaven will follow Christ to judgment. "And I saw the heaven opened; and behold, a white horse, and he that sat thereon called Faithful and True; and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. And his eyes are a flame of fire, and upon his head are many diadems; and he hath a name written, which none knoweth but he himself. And he is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood: and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of his mouth proceedeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God." The armies refer to the saints. Their following him upon white horses is symbolical of power and victory. In the very nature in which Christ was rejected, persecuted and slain, God will put honour upon Him when He thus comes to judgment.

The thought of the coming of Christ being followed with such terrible judgments on the wicked, is calculated to ex-

cite emotions of sadness. Still, we know that as the Judge He will judge righteously; and then the thought that wonderful and increasing blessings will follow the judgments, makes the thought of the judgments endurable. The judgments will be the precursors of greater blessings. Wickedness will be put down, misery will be removed, and well-doing and happiness will take their place.

Sinners should be warned of the soon coming of Christ, and urged to immediate preparation. If we proclaim not this truth, and, in consequence, they live in the neglect of it, and are not ready when Jesus comes, how shall we face them, and how shall we face the Judge, in that day? No fear of reproach, no dread of the charge of fanaticism, should deter us from this duty.

When Noah built the ark and warned the ungodly world around him of the coming flood, and scores of years passed away, and still the flood did not come, they doubtless thought him a fool for his labour. But the prediction was fulfilled, and the flood came at length, and they were then convinced, when it was too late, who had acted the part of a fool. So the prediction that the Lord will come again, will be fulfilled; and to those who are not looking for His coming, or preparing for it, He will come in judgment.

There were, however, a few—a very few—who believed God when He said He would send a flood upon the earth. Believing God, they provided against it; they prepared an ark and were saved: but the multitude believed not, and they perished. Christ before He went away told His disciples He would come again; we believe, and therefore prepare for His coming: but the multitude believe not, and therefore do not prepare. The unbelief and impiety

of those in the time of Noah did not prevent the flood; and the unbelief and daring impiety of the world in these latter days will not prevent the return of Christ.

The coming of the great day of the Lord will burst upon the world suddenly. Men will be overtaken with terrible judgments in an hour when they are dreaming of safety; they will be taken as in a snare. Just as a thief comes suddenly and unlooked for, so the day of the Lord, the judgments threatened to the wicked, will come upon the world of the ungodly. They will come at the opening of the sixth seal. But it is on the living that these judgments will come. The 7th, 8th, and 9th verses of the first chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians appear to refer to Christ's indignation against living sinners,—against those living in rebellion up to the hour when He comes in flaming fire, and not to the judgment of the wicked dead. There is nothing said in this passage about the resurrection.

And the commotions and wars, and striking changes in governments that have taken place of late years are the forerunners, with thunder-tongued warnings, of those terrible judgments at the coming of Christ. But many give no heed to these things. They see nothing in them which fulfils any prophetic word. They see nothing in them which tells of still greater events at hand. They see nothing in them to excite fear or alarm. Oh, let us, who do see these things, and whose eyes are opened to perceive their danger, cry aloud and bid them beware of their peril. Who knows but we may save some? The very thought of Christ's coming ought to alarm and awaken the unrenewed soul.

XXI..

AN EXPLANATION OF THE IMPRECATORY PSALMS.

ACCORDING to numerous passages God will use Israel, in the last decisive battle, to execute His terrible judgments on His enemies. We quote the following from amongst many :—“Let Israel rejoice in him that made Him : let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. . . For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people : He will beautify the meek with salvation. . . Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand ; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people ; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron ; to execute upon them the judgment written : this honour have all his saints.”—Psa. cxlix. 2, 4, 6—9. “Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off.” Mic. v. 9. We refer to the purpose of God in this matter in order to clear away a difficulty which many have experienced in reference to the imprecatory language in some of the psalms. Some who have felt that difficulty have tried, and tried in various ways, but tried in vain, to make those wishes of evil harmonize with the loving spirit of the gospel. Now this difficulty has arisen from not considering the difference between the two dispensations. They have looked upon the psalms as applicable to the church, and as designed to be expressive of christian experience. That many of them are so, we admit, and tens of thousands of christians have found a rich blessing

by adopting them as the language of their own hearts. But some of them have no reference to the church, and the language used in them was never meant to be suitable for believers in Jesus under the present dispensation. When the psalmist speaks of Jerusalem he does not mean the New Jerusalem above, but Jerusalem in the holy land. When he speaks of the calling, the confidence, the hopes, the privileges, and the glory of the saints, he does not refer to the church, but to Israel, or the faithful remnant.

Others, seeing the impossibility of any agreement between those psalms and the gospel of Christ, attribute them to his imperfection. One writer, after referring to the fact of "David imprecating deadly vengeance on his enemies," says, "All this seems to me distinctly to prove that David was not a perfect man, but that the Spirit of God showed in him, and allowed him to speak, what were the *legal* aspects and the legal consequences of such acts as those of David's enemies." After a very critical study of these psalms, Henry Deacon says, "Let me at once avow my belief that David was a prophet, that he was a type of Christ, that he did as a prophet predict woe upon God's enemies, largely mingling therewith human passion and imperfection, and the ignorant errors of his age." Some learned commentators, as Delitzsch and Perowne, are one in thinking "that the human element mingles largely in these psalms, and so far from supposing David to have been pre-eminently prophetic when engaged in their composition, they account for much of their peculiarity by laying stress upon the *limitation* of his knowledge of the future." That David's knowledge of the future was limited, we have no doubt, and yet to us it is very clear

that God revealed much of the future to him as it will be connected with Israel; and that he was pre-eminently prophetic in many of the psalms, we verily believe. His knowledge of the future beyond the Millennial age—the eternal future—was no doubt very limited; God reserved the fuller revelation till the christian dispensation began. With his dim light of the future, and of what was implied in the terms he used, the psalmist could not have realized the full meaning of his own words. But he would probably have nothing more in his mind than the infliction of temporal judgments. He testified to Jehovah's anger against transgressors, and to the awful truth that justice and vengeance would overtake them. He showed an anxiety to have the righteousness of Jehovah vindicated; but it would seem as if he saw no way for this to be done but in putting down the unrighteous and lifting up the righteous. The language he uses cannot be justified except as prophetic, which we believe it is, and as assuming the final impenitence of those unrighteous ones. Two of the curses in the psalms under consideration seem to have had their fulfilment in the time of Christ, as referred to in *Acts i. 20.*

We conclude then that the language of David in the imprecatory psalms is prophetic, and that it would be sinful and wicked upon the lips of a believer in Christ. Upon no other ground can we justify it upon the lips of **David**. Unless it is prophetic, it cannot be harmonized even with the religion of his own dispensation. When he wishes evil to fall upon his adversaries; when he prays that Jehovah would pour out His indignation upon them, and blot them out of the book of the living, and let them

go down quick into hell, or hades, he utters language never intended to be used by the church under any circumstances whatever, but only suitable for the remnant of Israel at the end of the age. The church are not permitted to wish evil to come upon their enemies; they are commanded to love their enemies, and to return good for evil, and this must be the disposition of the church to the end of the age. A contrary spirit is not allowed, is not sanctioned under the christian dispensation. But when the present economy is closed, and the great tribulation is come, and a violent persecution of the faithful part of Israel is in progress, that godly remnant may, consistently, and in harmony with the Divine will, both desire and pray for their destruction. But how can they do so? you may ask. We answer, God has appointed Israel's deliverance to be brought about by the destruction of their enemies. That is God's settled plan, and He has made it known to His holy prophets; and hence prayers for the overthrow and destruction of their adversaries and persecutors are not unfrequent in the prophecies referring to the time of Israel's trouble. Hence the psalmist, in view of the same tribulation, gives utterance to language only suitable to the condition of the faithful remnant at that period. Different expositors, holding the post-Millennial view, and putting a wrong interpretation on the prophecies, and on some of the psalms, which are also prophecies, have felt the greatest difficulty in explaining what are called the imprecatory psalms. Some have given one view and some another, and they have tried in vain to reconcile them with Christianity. They are not intended to be the language of any christian towards his enemies, however malicious

or violent those enemies may be. They are intended to be the language of faithful Israel, in the terrible day of their greatest calamities, when their deliverance will depend upon the interposition of Christ in their behalf, and the signal destruction of their persecutors. Understood as prayers suited to the state of Israel in that day, these imprecatory psalms require no explanation; they are in harmony with the revealed purpose of God; all is clear.

A misapplication of Scripture often causes great confusion, and prevents a right understanding of the truth. Many portions of Scripture refer, and are only applicable to, the tribes of Judah and the tribes of Israel, or Ephraim; many other portions refer simply to the Gentile nations; and many others refer exclusively to believers, or to the church; or in a wider sense, to Christendom. Now nothing is more common than to take prophecies which refer to the wonderful future of Israel, and apply them to the church. We see them so applied in books; we hear them so applied in sermons, and speeches, and sometimes even in prayers. The great obscurity that prevails is very lamentable, and extraordinary efforts are needed to remove it.

XXII.

DIVERSITY—sometimes considerable diversity—has marked the interpretations of the prophecies. That diversity has very often been the result of preconceived notions. Men

have come to the study of the prophetic word, professedly to ascertain the true meaning of the Holy Spirit in that word, but have been biassed, perhaps without knowing it, by the views of some learned and popular writers. It is no marvel that we have different interpretations of the seventy weeks of Daniel. We have seen lately, by an American writer, an interpretation very different from our own. We do not, indeed, recollect having seen one in which we agree on every point. We have endeavoured to find out the true meaning, for we have no interest either in holding or propagating any erroneous view. We wish simply for the truth, for in the knowledge of that lies our truest interests.

The prophet's relation of what he was doing when Gabriel touched him, and of the information he gave him, is touchingly simple and beautiful. "And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God ; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee ; for thou art greatly beloved : therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision."—Dan. ix. 20—23. Then follows the information or prophecy.

Verse 24: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression,

and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy," or *holy of holies*. By this expression the Jews understand the sanctuary of the Most High to be meant. What are we to understand by the seventy weeks? On this point there is little if any disagreement among Biblical students. A year must be counted for every day of these seventy weeks, and then they will make 490 years. We believe that this system—a day for a year—is sometimes applied to prophecies very erroneously. We believe it is sometimes applied where the evidence is abundant that literal days are intended. The context, and comparing Scripture with Scripture, should lead us to decide when, and when not, to apply the year-day system. In the case before us we are compelled to apply it to the seventy weeks, because subsequent history has shown that the prophecy was not fulfilled in seventy literal weeks. We must, therefore, interpret this on the year-day system. Four hundred and ninety years then were determined upon Daniel's people and his holy city. It will not be disputed that the Jews were Daniel's people, and that Jerusalem is here called his holy city; and it is clear also that the prophecy relates, mainly, to the Jews, and not to the Gentile nations. The sacrifice which Christ offered for sins is for Gentile as well as Jew; but in this and following passages it is presented with special reference to its bearing upon the Jewish nation.

Verse 25: "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be

seven weeks, and three score and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." The language used here about building again the wall and the street, and restoring Jerusalem, furnishes positive evidence that the city was in ruins when Gabriel thus spoke to the prophet. It was the time of his and the nations captivity under the Medo-Persian government. But Gabriel particularly desired Daniel to understand, and for this he gave him skill, that from the issue of the commandment to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, should be sixty-nine weeks, that is, on the year-day system, four hundred and eighty-three years. Now in the second chapter of Nehemiah that word was given to Nehemiah by Artaxerxes the king, and it is important to observe that the record states that it was in the twentieth year of his reign. Nehemiah had sorrow of heart, and was sad in the king's presence; and on the king inquiring the cause, he said, "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire." Inquiring then for what he made request, Nehemiah, after prayer to God, said, "If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it." His request was granted, and the king sent him to build the city, and gave him letters to the governors beyond the river, that they might convey him over till he came into Judah, and also a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he might give him timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of

the city. The king sent captains of the army and horsemen with him. After viewing the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, he said to the rulers, the nobles, the priests, and the Jews, "Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work." In the third chapter the names and order of those that built the wall are given. And in the fourth chapter there is an account of the opposition that Nehemiah met with in his work. His enemies scoffed, and they formed a conspiracy together to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder the work. This fulfilled that part of Daniel's vision, in which he saw that the street should be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. But Nehemiah prayed, and the builders worked, with their swords girded by their side, and the wall at length was finished.

Now it must be remembered that the command was given and the work of restoring Jerusalem commenced, in the twentieth year of the reign of king Artaxerxes. This was about four hundred and fifty-four years before Christ. According to the best and most learned chronologers, the Messiah was born about four years prior to the commencement of the era from which we date, and was crucified in the year twenty-nine. This will the better enable us to understand,

Verse 26: "And after (the) threescore and two weeks

shall Messiah be cut off, but *not for himself*: (that is, and 'shall have nothing,' or 'there was nothing to Him.') and the people of the prince (a Roman prince, but not Titus) that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." The phrase "after the threescore and two weeks," evidently implies that it was at the end of the sixty two weeks,—the seven weeks having been previously mentioned,—and before the seventieth week commenced, that the Messiah was to be put to death. Those who attempt to show that it was otherwise, give to this language an unnatural meaning. From the issuing of the commandment for the restoration of Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, was to be seven weeks; and sixty two weeks, that is, sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. This command was issued B.C. four hundred and fifty-four years. The Messiah was crucified in the year twenty-nine, thus completing the sixty-nine weeks, or four hundred and eighty-three years. The prince mentioned in this verse we believe to be a different person from the one mentioned in the verse preceding. The evidence of this is conclusive. Indeed, it is impossible that this prince is the same as the Prince in verse 25. Christ did not destroy the city nor the sanctuary, nor did His people do this, under His authority. You will see that the translators have distinguished the Prince in verse 25 by spelling the word with a capital P, while the prince of verse 26 is not thus distinguished. It is the people, or the Roman armies commanded by Titus,—it is the people, whose future prince in the end of the age shall be the eighth head, that were to destroy the city and the

sanctuary. The prince that shall come will not destroy the temple, but will desolate it. Though eighteen hundred years have already passed since that people destroyed the temple, they are still the people of the prince yet to rise up, because, as a people, as the fourth kingdom they were to exist—part of the time in union, part of the time in a divided form, and at the end in a confederacy of ten kingdoms until Christ supplants them with His own kingdom. But it may be said if this explanation is correct, events of a very opposite nature, and to transpire with a long period intervening between them, are set forth in the same prophecy. That is true, but such a thing is not uncommon in old Testament prophecy. Quite a number of similar instances might be given, and therefore this does not in the least invalidate our exposition. Take one instance. In Isa. lxi. 1—3, there is a prophecy of Messiah's office. One part of it was fulfilled by Christ when on earth; the other part remains to be fulfilled at His second coming. Between the two parts there is a break of more than eighteen hundred years. And these two parts are more closely united in the prophecy than those under consideration, being both in one verse, and divided only by a comma.

Verse 27: "And he shall confirm the (a) covenant with (the) many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." For the seventieth week a covenant is to be confirmed with the many, and then violated in the midst of the week. But there is not the

least evidence that the Messiah ever had anything to do with such a covenant. To suppose that He had is mere assumption. If Christ is referred to, the passage is destitute of any true meaning. The covenant of Christ, or the new covenant, is not limited to one week, or seven years, nor to seventy years. His is an everlasting covenant. There is not a hint in any part of the book of a seven years' covenant between Christ and the Jews being confirmed by Himself; and had He made such a covenant, and confirmed it, how can we suppose He would have broken it? Evidently he who shall confirm and afterwards disregard this covenant is the prince who is meant in verse 26. "And the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." To this very covenant, both to the making of it and the violation of it, there seems to be a plain reference in Isa. xxviii. 14—18: "Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell (Sheol) are we at agreement; when the overthrowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell (Sheol) shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall

pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it." We believe that the prince who will make this covenant will be the last Anti-christ, and that he will make it with the mass of the Jews who will have gathered together in Jerusalem a little while previous to the descent of the Lord to Mount Zion ; we believe that he will confirm this covenant with them at the beginning of the seventieth week, and thereby deceive them ; and that in the midst of the week he will violate it, show himself in his true character, and persecute and destroy during the latter half of the week, or, literally, forty-two months, or three years and a half. This week then may commence as soon as the Jews again possess the holy land.

Now it will be observed that these seventy weeks are broken up into three distinct periods. First, seven weeks ; second, sixty-two weeks ; and third, one week. Why are they thus divided into different and unequal periods ? Evidently because some great events were to take place inside of each of those periods.

Some hold that the work set apart for the seventy weeks was completed at the cross ; that it extended to the middle of the seventieth week ; that it was fulfilled in a less period than the prophecy announced ; that God cut it short ; and that that left three years and a half to be fulfilled, or to transpire after the cross. This is the result, partly, of a false chronology, and partly of a misunderstanding of the work of the seventieth week, and of the prince who figures in that work. Others endeavour to make the seventieth week stretch out to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. But this is disproved by the context. The prediction foretold that idolatry should be set up,

which is what is meant by the term, *abominations*, and this was not fulfilled when Titus took the city; therefore it must be future. He caused much wickedness, but he did not desecrate the temple with idolatry.

We believe that when the events of the sixty-ninth week were accomplished at the cutting off of the Messiah, there was a suspension, or a break, in these weeks, and that the seventieth week is yet future. Bishop W. R. Nicholson, of the reformed Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, speaking of the time that the restoration of Israel will be effected, says, "It is in the last of Daniel's seventy weeks that they are presented to our view as nationally established in their own land; and that seventieth week is the seven years immediately preceding the Advent." Another writer, in explanation of the reason why the sixty-nine weeks are severed from the seventieth, says, "The death of Christ rent the chain and broke off the relations of the people of Israel with God. Hence the Jews, having rejected their own Messiah, the last week is for a time set aside . . . The interruption of the seventy weeks takes place after the death of Christ, and the next events related are no accomplishment of that series at all . . . Until Christ are sixty-nine weeks, and then events occur which the prophecy clearly reveals, but as clearly reveals that they are after the sixty-nine weeks, and before the seventieth . . . On the arrival of that week, full blessing comes in for Israel and Jerusalem . . . There is a regular chain up to the close of the sixty-ninth week, and then comes a great gap. The death of Christ broke the bond of connexion between God and His people, and there was now no living link between them. They cut off their own

Messiah, and have since lost, for a time, their national place." This is the period of their interregnum. They are dead as to their national life. Every thing is a blank to them regarded as a nation.

But further, the 24th verse promises the accomplishment of more inside of the seventy weeks than as yet been accomplished even to this day; and therefore, the last week must remain to be fulfilled. It must be acknowledged that this has special reference to Israel, to Daniel's people. The phrase "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins," can only refer to the giving up of their unbelief, and their acceptance of the Christ as their Redeemer, as a nation. Until in their national character they do repent of their rejection of their Messiah, and own Him as their rightful Lord and King, their transgression cannot be said to be finished, nor an end made to their sins. Nor can everlasting righteousness be said to be brought in till as a people they are all made righteous. We are fully aware that Christ, by the shedding of His blood, has become the propitiation for sin, has made provision for the finishing of transgression, and for the reconciliation of men to Him. His atoning work was accomplished, this provision was made, the means of reconciliation were provided, by the time the sixty-ninth week was completed; but Israel as a nation have not yet received the reconciliation; as a nation they have no faith yet in the atoning sacrifice; and to them as a nation there has *not yet been any application* of the blessings of Christ's death and resurrection and mediation. And this is the great point involved. It cannot be denied that the application of the blessings resulting from Christ's sacrifice to Daniel's people

and his holy city, has not yet taken place. It is a thing yet unfulfilled. After the end of the sixty-nine weeks and before the seventieth week commences, things are predicted to take place which are reckoned as events in which Israel takes no share; they are things with which the Gentiles have to do. But inside of the seventy-weeks, or, "within this prophetic period," to quote the words of William Trotter, "all the events enumerated in verse 24, just quoted, were to be accomplished, and accomplished on Daniel's people and Daniel's holy city. Such is the general, comprehensive statement of the whole burden of the prophecy, with which Gabriel's communication opens." Another writer observes, "We learn that the seventy weeks were to include the bringing in everlasting righteousness, and sealing up the vision and prophecy, and the anointing of the holy of holies: and all this in respect of the *Jews and Jerusalem*. The foundation of this was laid in the cross; but where is the fulfilment?" The fulfilment, indeed, is not yet; in its most important feature it cannot take place till the descent of Israel's King and Deliverer; it is not until He comes that they nationally receive Him; and therefore, we conclude, —and there is no other conclusion that is consistent with all the circumstances,—that the seventieth week has yet to transpire; and that this is the reason why it is cut off from the rest in the prophecy. It is when the seventieth week is completed that Israel is forgiven; it is then that they are restored, redeemed, reconciled, and blessed. We believe, however, that we are now very near the commencement of the seventieth week—literally very near it—and that in that week, or in those seven years the most stupendous and wonderful events will take place the world has ever yet witnessed.

XXIII.

THE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND
SEALED ONES.

It is a point much disputed who these represent, though if preconceived notions were kept out of sight, and the word was closely followed, there would be no difficulty in deciding the question. John says, "After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that no wind should blow on the earth, or on the sea, or upon any tree. And I saw another angel ascend from the sun-rising, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a great voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we shall have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads. And I heard the number of them which were sealed, a hundred and forty and four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the children of Israel."—Rev. vii. 1—4. In verses 5—8, are given the names of all the tribes thus sealed; as the tribe of Juda, the tribe of Reuben, and so on till the whole twelve tribes are mentioned by name. Now in such a plain passage, from which difficult figures and symbols are excluded, it is strange that any should look for a spiritual meaning. Yet some fancy they see such a meaning. It is said that these sealed ones "are not the seed of Jacob after the flesh;" "that the Israel of God of the New Testament are the people of God, those who *are* Israel whether *of* Israel or

not;" that "when the patriarch Jacob and the prophets Moses and Ezekiel prophesied, it was of the former;" that "when John was shown in vision, it was of the latter;" and that the sealing, therefore, "belongs to the present age, and therefore *prior* to the Redeemer coming out of Zion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, which belongs to the age yet future." This we regard as assumption without any proof. The whole structure of Rev. vii. 1—8, is against this theory. Verses 1—3 show plainly that it belongs to the time of trouble, when God's judgments are being poured down. The twelve tribes are on the earth. Some judgments have been poured down; others are about to be poured down. And the angels were commanded not to hurt the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, till the servants of God were sealed. The judgments threatened were suspended for a while till the sealing was accomplished. Then twelve thousand of each of the twelve tribes were sealed. All this the highly favoured seer foresaw in vision, and we believe it will be fulfilled in the end of the age. And we believe it will be a literal sealing, in order that they may be preserved from the judgments while they are falling on others around them. A reference to chap. ix. 4, will make this still more clear. When the woes and plagues are falling upon men, by means of the locusts who shall come up out of the smoke of the pit, they are allowed to hurt, or torment, only those who have not the seal of God. "And it was said unto them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only such men as have not the seal of God on their foreheads." And kept from the judgments John sees them in chap. xiv. 1, standing with the Lamb

on the Mount Zion, "having His name, and the name of His Father, written on their foreheads." These are said, verse 4, "to be the first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb." That is, they are the first gathered for the Lord after His descent to the holy land; the second, or next fruit gathered is the great multitude of Rev. vii. 9, as we shall presently show, who will be faithful in the terrible time of trouble. Some of these may pass through the great tribulation without suffering death; others may be put to death and raised again.

To return to the question as to who the 144,000 sealed ones are. General H. Goodwyn says, "There is both uniform and concurrent evidence that the 144,000 sealed ones represent the saved remnant of corporate Israel, an "election of grace," the nucleus of the nation in all its tribes as they will be found at the times of restitution." It is further said, by a living writer advocating the view we are combating: "The entire scope of the book of Revelation from chap. vi. 1, to chap. xx. 3, as a Futurist would read it, belongs to the future of the *present* age, and *therefore* no mention whatever is made in it of Israel after the flesh." Any one with common sense may see that between this premiss and the conclusion there is no necessary connection. And as a matter of fact Israel after the flesh is spoken of in chapter vii., and the twelve tribes are distinctly mentioned by name. The wording of the whole passage gives no countenance to such a conclusion. The literal text is all against it. And a great number of passages in the Old Testament refer to Israel after the flesh as they will figure in the future of the present age. We cannot draw the line exactly where the present age will end, and

the Millennial age will begin, so as to mark off the last events of the present and the first events of the future age. And while judgments will come upon literal Israel in the end of the present age, yet when the indignation is past, God will also deal with them in mercy. How could he save a remnant of them at the beginning of the next age, if He did not deal with them in mercy at the ending of the present age? Mercy must be shown to them before this age closes, or they could not be carried over into the next age. If they all fall under the terrible judgments that shall come upon the earth as the night is closing, there will be no saved remnant to form the nucleus of the righteous nation in the dawn of the Millennial day.

XXIV.

THE GREAT MULTITUDE.

AFTER the vision of the 144,000 sealed ones, John says, "After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands, and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."—Rev. vii. 9, 10. Who are they who compose this multitude? We answer, the context will shew us, we think. It seems clear that this great multitude are not the church. This multitude seem composed of those who have been saved out of all the nations

during the time of trouble. The following are our reasons for concluding that they are not the glorified church. 1. In chapters iv. v., the glorified church are represented by the four and twenty elders; and in verse 13 of chapter vii. where this great multitude are brought in view, the elders evidently behold the glorious company with astonishment and joy. Hence that company and themselves cannot be the same. If the elders, therefore, represent the glorified church, the multitude are a company of saved ones distinct from the church. Then one of the elders inquired, respecting this multitude, "These which are arrayed in the white robes, who are they, and whence came they?" But this inquiry we conclude, would not have been made, if the glorified church and the great multitude had been identical. 2. The reply of the elder to his own question further confirms this view. "These are they which come out of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." John had passed through the vision of the scene described in chapter iv. He sees the church in heaven, crowned and glorified. After the receiving up and the crowning of the church, the unparalleled time of trouble, the fierce persecution under the Anti-christ, sets in. In the sixth chapter, judgments begin to fall on the earth. Then after these things John saw four angels, who had power to hurt the earth and the sea. And he saw another angel, having the seal of the living God, who commanded the four angels to hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till they had sealed the servants of God. Then it was after this, that he saw this great multitude who had come out of the great tribulation. This multitude then are not the same as the church, for

the church are seen in heaven before the great tribulation commences. They will be sufferers in the time of trouble, but overcoming through Christ, they will be brought safely out of it. 3. This great multitude are “before the throne of God; and they serve him *day and night* in His *temple*,” which connects them in some way with the earth, in which that distinction will continue. But the church, as we have shown, are seen in heaven, or as we learn from chapter xxi. in “the holy city, new Jerusalem,” where there shall be *no night*, and in which there is *no temple*; “for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.” It is indeed said, in king James’ version, which many still read, that “He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them,” and this might seem against the explanation we have given. But the meaning of the Holy Spirit long before the new version appeared, was discovered, by examining the Greek, to be that “the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,” God will dwell *over* them, will overshadow them with His presence and His glory, and the saved “nations shall walk amidst the light thereof.” Verses 22, 24, 25. Remarking on this phrase in the version of king James, W. Kelly says, “In chap. xxi, we find God dwelling among men. It is not the same phrase at all. Similar in English, it is totally different in the Greek. In chapter vii. the idea is that the presence of God *overshadows* the Gentiles, but there is no such thing intended as God’s taking His place *among* them. They are blessed of God, overshadowed and protected as Israel of old under the cloud of His presence.” But all this is made plain in the revised version, where the phrase is changed for one which conveys the exact sense: “And He

that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them." Thus this passage as we have it now fully confirms the view we have given, that the great multitude are not the glorified church. Among the latter He will dwell, while the former will have His presence abiding over them to shelter and protect and comfort them.

Thus in the unparalleled time of trouble there will be saved a godly remnant of literal Israel, and an unnumbered multitude of Gentiles from all the quarters of the world. Therefore, all the twelve tribes of Israel, and multitudes out of the Gentile world are represented in chap. vii. as in a state of salvation and happiness. The former are sealed by the angel, and the latter are clothed with white robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb. But ere these are seen in the vision, we repeat, as this point is so important, John sees the church in heaven, glorified, crowned, and blessed, (in which, observe, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, as such,) symbolized by the four and twenty elders. Thus there are three classes of saved ones brought to view in chapters iv. v. and vii. 1. The heavenly body, the bride of Christ, clothed in white raiment, having crowns of gold on their heads, every one of them having harps, and made a kingdom and priests. 2. A sealed remnant of all the tribes of Israel. 3. An immense multitude saved out of all nations, having been faithful in the great tribulation, refusing to worship the beast or his image, and therefore, having white robes and palms, but not crowned, as the church are.

To keep this subject in its various parts before the mind as far as possible in a connected form, we would here recapitulate, in a few words, the chief points we have

already brought before you. We have dwelt at length on the apostacy, and shown that when it has reached its height, terrible judgments will follow. We have shown further that when Christ comes in judgment, sitting on the throne of His glory, it will be to judge the living, and not the dead. But prior to this judgment, as we have shown, the Anti-christ will appear in the closing days of the apostacy, and the unparalleled time of trouble will come; and prior to then development of "the man of sin," and its terrible results, Christ will appear in the clouds, and call up to Himself His redeemed church,—the living and the dead who are fully prepared; for His saints are to *attend* Him when He comes to take vengeance on the ungodly. But some may think that this looks like *two* coming, whereas we only read of *one* more coming. The truth on this point, as far as we have been able to discover it is, there will be different stages of the *same* coming, or the same great event. He comes again to the earth, but He pauses on His way, if we may so speak; for a while He comes no nearer than the clouds. While in the clouds, He summonses His redeemed and purified ones around Him; the marriage of the bridegroom and the bride is then celebrated in the holy city, and a short period seems to elapse before He descends with His retinue to the mount Zion. But whether the removing of his church, the gathering together of His disciples from among unbelievers and carnal professors, will be visible to the world, we know not; it may be visible, or it may not; but one thing is certain, they will be missed when thus taken away; their places will be vacant; and their being taken away will doubtless be a cause of alarm to those who are left, and to some, probably, a means of

awakening and conversion. The import of the following striking passage, in relation to these events, is not sufficiently pondered either by christian people or unbelieving sinners. "Then shall two men be in the field; one is taken, and one is left: two women shall be grinding at the mill; one is taken, and one is left.—Matt. xxiv. 40, 41. Then after the Lamb's bride is gathered into His presence, and God's purposes are accomplished in reference to the revelation of the Anti-christ, the Son of God will come, as we have seen, to judge and punish the Anti-christ and his allies. Then after this solemn judgment and signal punishment of Christ's foes,—after the winding up of this present dispensation, a new and more glorious state of things will be introduced. Christ will bring salvation to His chosen people, Israel. A hundred and forty four thousand out of each of the twelve tribes shall be saved; and of the Gentiles many shall prove faithful to the truth and faithful to God in passing through "the hour of trial;" there shall be saved of them a great multitude. He will thus establish His kingdom on the earth, and reign over the nations a thousand years.

XXV.

EVENTS WHICH SHALL MARK THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM.

ONE of those events will be the depriving Satan of his power. For many long and weary centuries Satan has

made it his business to tempt man, and to lead him to disobey his Maker. He is the great adversary both of God and the human family, and has used all his power and cunning in endeavouring to thwart the benevolent purposes of heaven in regard to the well-being of man. And for three years and a half before he is bound, his wrath against the saints will be terrible, knowing that he has but a short time. Cast down to the earth, he, with his numerous agents, the chief of whom will be the Anti-christ, will persecute the remnant of believers and make war with them. But great as his power will be in that awful time, it will be taken from him. "And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, the old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut it; and sealed it over him, that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be finished: after this he must be loosed for a little time."—Rev. xx. 1—3.

There are many things connected with the government of the world which are mysterious, things which are permitted by Divine Providence that try our faith. That the continued existence of the devil, the great foe of God and man, should be permitted, or, if permitted, that he should be allowed to tempt mankind to sin and open revolt against God; and that this opposition to God and His government and the entire race of man should have been permitted to exist already some six thousand years, and the consequences to mankind in all the ages to be so disastrous, so terrible, so wide-spread, and so far reaching

into the future, is a mystery we cannot fully fathom. Still, we accept the revelation of God which tells of these things, and which also tells of the great Coming One who shall put down the powers of evil, and imprison Satan, and deliver his oppressed people by divine intervention. And when we drop mortality, and are glorified and perfected, and see everything with a clearer vision and in the light of eternity, we shall see the wisdom and goodness of the divine order. The evil that has been permitted to exist, tremendous, gigantic, and wide-spread as it has been, will be outweighed by good infinitely greater. And the suffering that has been permitted, terrible, appalling, overwhelming, and general as it has been, and will yet be, will be outweighed by an amount of happiness also infinitely greater.

Another wonderful event, and probably the next in order, which will mark the commencement of the Millennium, will be the raising from the dead of the witnesses, or what is called by John "the first resurrection;" not, indeed, the first, in the absolute sense of the word, but the first of two resurrections mentioned in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, one at the commencement of the thousand years, and the other at the close. The latter will be the resurrection of all the wicked, and also of all the righteous who have not been previously raised; and, therefore, it is usually termed, "the general resurrection." Of this the Apostle says, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. . . . And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them."—Rev. xx. 12, 13. Not a single man or

woman, of all who ever dwelt on this earth, will then be left in the grave. Every one shall be quickened and raised to life, and give an account of himself to the Judge on the great white throne. What is therefore called the *first* resurrection in the 5th verse of this chapter, is doubtless so called because it is prior to this mentioned in the 12th and 13th verses. Of the two thus brought before us, in this prophecy of John, it is the first.

But this resurrection is evidently not the same as that mentioned in 1 Thess. iv. 13—17, which passage we have already quoted. It seems clear that the apostle here cannot refer to the same event as that of which John treats in the Revelation. The resurrection which John's prophecy points to will be one of faithful souls who will be martyred during the period that "the man of sin" will be revealed, and therefore, will be limited,—will relate only to part of the saints. The resurrection which Paul speaks of seems to refer to all the pious dead; for he refers to those who "sleep in Jesus," or to "the dead in Christ," without any qualifying remark. That which John foretells will not take place till the end of the great tribulation, when Satan will be bound, and the Lord will return to Zion, and the Millennium will commence. That which Paul foretells will take place just before the great tribulation, when Christ descends from heaven into the air, and when the then living saints shall be suddenly changed, and caught up to meet Him. The resurrection then set forth by Paul will be the first resurrection, in the proper sense of that term,—the resurrection in which all will have a part who are now sleeping in Jesus; and that which is designated the first in Rev. xx. 5, is not the first,

strictly speaking, but is simply thus designated to distinguish it from the resurrection of the wicked set forth in the latter part of that chapter. The chapter mentions two resurrections, very opposite in their character, and that is called the first, because it is the first of the two, the first as to the order of time.

We also learn from John's prophecy that the wicked dead will not be raised till the end of the Millennium. After speaking of the resurrection "of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God," he says, "The rest of the dead lived not until the thousand years should be finished." That is, they did not return to life, were not raised from the dead, till the close of the Millennial reign. There is no hope that those who die out of Christ will be raised to share the blessedness of Christ's reign, or the glory of His kingdom: they will only be raised for judgment and punishment,—the punishment of the second death, which is utter destruction "in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone."

As some have endeavoured to fasten a spiritual interpretation on this resurrection of the witnesses, we would here show the absurdity of that notion. Whitby explains it to be the "conversion of the Jews." The saints' reign with Christ on the earth for a thousand years, he explains to denote "the revival of evangelical doctrine." And by the term, "the rest of the dead," he thinks is meant "a generation of bad men, who are to be born about the end of the Millennium, and to annoy the congregations of the faithful." But to explain all this figuratively, and speak of this first resurrection as conversion, as a resurrection

from sin to a spiritual life, is simply to evade the force of the passage. The witnesses, who from their love to Christ sacrificed their lives, were not dead in trespasses and sins. The idea is too absurd to need refutation, were it not for the fact that absurd as it is, so many believe it. It was their natural life—the life of the body—that they had lost, and it was that which was restored in the resurrection. But if a figurative sense is fixed upon this first clause, so must a figurative sense be fixed upon the second; and that would make “the rest of the dead” to be raised to a spiritual life a thousand years after the witnesses, which is evidently contrary to the sense of the apostle. Bishop Newton says, “The death and resurrection here mentioned must . . . be concluded to be real. If the martyrs rise only in a spiritual sense, then *the rest of the dead* rise only in a spiritual; but if *the rest of the dead* really rise, the martyrs rise in the same manner. There is no difference between them, and we should be cautious and tender of making the first resurrection an allegory, lest others should reduce the second into an allegory too, like Hymeneus and Philetus.”

Joseph Mede held the same view, and he was not only a pious, but a very learned man. His learning was profound, and few have studied the Apocalypse, and honestly sought to get at its true meaning as he did. He even strove to avoid the conclusions to which he was afterwards forced to arrive, by the plain and evident meaning of the text. He did not bring a theory to the book, to search therein for proof texts in order to hold up that theory; but while he had a leaning to the view which had begun to prevail in the days of Constantine, was determined to

follow the truth wherever it might lead, and to get at the true meaning of the Holy Spirit in the word. He was compelled therefore to put a literal interpretation upon both clauses of this passage. He saw it was demanded by the very construction of the passage. If the term resurrection is literal in the one part of the text, it must be so in the other. Mr. Mede says, "However the word resurrection by itself might seem ambiguous, yet in a sentence composed in this manner,—viz., "of the dead, those which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, &c., "lived again when the thousand years began; but the rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were ended,"—it would be a most harsh and violent interpretation to say that dead, and consequently living again from the dead, should not in both cases be taken in the same meaning. For such a speech, in ordinary construction, implies that some of the dead lived again in the beginning of the thousand years; in that sense, the rest should live again at the end of the thousand years; and *e contra*, in what manner the rest of the dead should live again at the end of the thousand years, in that manner those who were beheaded for Jesus lived again in the beginning of the thousand years; which living again of those some, is called the first resurrection."

As a right understanding of Rev. xx. 4, 5, is so important in the discussion of this whole subject, we will here give the views of Dean Alford, which fully confirm our own. Our own, however, were formed years and years before we saw the Dean's. In his introduction to the Revelation, and in treating of different systems of interpretation, he observes, "On one point I have ventured to speak strongly, because my conviction on it is strong,

founded on the rules of fair and consistent interpretation. I mean the necessity of accepting literally the first resurrection, and the millennial reign. It seems to me that if in a sentence where two resurrections are spoken of with no mark of distinction between them (it is otherwise in John v. 28, which is commonly alleged for the view I am combating,—in a sentence where, one resurrection having been related, “the rest of the dead” are afterwards mentioned, —we are at liberty to understand the former one figuratively and spiritually, and the latter literally and materially, then there is an end of all definite meaning in plain words, and the Apocalypse, or any other book, may mean anything we please. It is a curious fact that those who maintain this, studious as they generally are to uphold the primitive interpretation, are obliged, not only to wrest the plain sense of words, but to desert the unanimous consent of the primitive Fathers, some of whom lived early enough to have retained apostolic tradition on this point. Not till millennial views had run into unspiritual excesses, was this interpretation departed from.”

Further on in his work, when Rev. xx. 5, comes under his notice, commenting on the first of these two resurrections, Dean Alford says, “It will have been long ago anticipated by the readers of this Commentary, that I cannot consent to distort its words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for 300 years, understood them in the plain literal sense: and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors

who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instances of unanimity which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain souls lived at the first, and the rest of the dead lived only at the end of a specified period after that first,—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual* rising with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave;—then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to anything. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain: but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope."

This seems to be the most fitting place to offer a few remarks on the witnesses of whose resurrection we have been speaking. They are mentioned in a previous chapter, Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11, where they are represented as praying for punishment speedily to overtake their enemies. They were moved by a profound feeling of the injustice under which they had suffered; and holy vengeance, and not pardoning grace, is what they desire now to be exercised. Strange as such a prayer may sound, coming from martyred saints, the cry of these souls under the altar is a cry for judgment, not mercy, to come upon their foes. Their state and circumstances, and their relationships in that hour,

will justify this prayer. Their condition will be very different from the condition of any christians prior to that period. When christians suffer they are to suffer patiently. When Stephen was being cruelly murdered, he prayed for his murderers, and said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." This is the spirit of Christ, the spirit of Christianity; and this grace,—the grace of forbearance, and patience, and love to enemies,—we are to manifest when we suffer for righteousness' sake. But when the church are called up to heaven, and special judgments begin to fall upon the world, and those who, after the rapture of the church repent and turn to God, are persecuted to death for their witnessing for Christ, a different state of things will exist; and what would be wrong for christians to do now, will be proper for the saints of that period to do. God is now long-suffering, and is dealing with the world in grace and mercy; that is the distinguishing privilege and glory of the present dispensation; and the saints now must acquiesce in God's will and purpose and design, and must show mercy and forgiveness towards their enemies. But when the church is completed, when all who believe in Christ prior to the hour of His coming into the air, are gathered together into His presence, God will soon begin to manifest terrible judgments towards His adversaries; and those who do become witnesses for Jesus in that day—and many will—must acquiesce in God's dealings with the ungodly at that period. Hence the souls of those that were slain, whom John saw under the altar, prayed to be avenged of their enemies. They knew that God *would* avenge them, and hence cried, "How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood

on them that dwell on the earth?" But a white robe was given to each of them; and in answer to their cry, "it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little time, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, which should be killed even as they were, should be fulfilled." Others were yet to suffer death besides themselves, subsequent to the rapture of the church, and after those others had been killed for the testimony which they held, their prayer would be answered, judgments would be poured down upon their enemies, and they would live again, would be raised from the dead. John foresew all this, and the relation is given in Rev. xx. Theirs is the resurrection we have just been considering, and which is there called the first resurrection, to distinguish it from another mentioned afterwards in that chapter—the resurrection of the wicked—and which will not take place till a thousand years later. And that is one of the wonderful events which shall mark the beginning of the Millennial reign.

XXVI.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM, OR CHRIST'S REIGN OVER THE EARTH.

THE kingdom will not come till this age has come to an end. According to the apostle John this age or dispensation is to be distinguished by many anti-christs, by proud, ambitious men who assume authority which belongs only to Christ; and according to Paul, in the end of the age

one shall rise up who on account of his impiety, and blasphemy, and leadership in wickedness, shall be called "the man of sin," and "the son of perdition." But how can this be made to agree with the theory of a thousand years' reign of holiness and blessedness before the end of the age? During this age, and before the coming of Christ, according to the common teaching, we are to have the Millennium; but according to Scripture teaching, there is to be the revelation of the Anti-christ, for Christ is to consume or destroy him when he comes. Now it is evident the Anti-christ cannot prevail while Satan is bound, and righteousness covers the earth. Which teaching then is the true teaching? If Christ at His coming will destroy the Anti-christ, the Anti-christ must have run his course at the time of the advent; therefore there can be no Millennium prior to the advent, unless the Millennium and "the man of sin" exist together, which is impossible.

When Jesus then comes into the air and calls all his saints around him; when the Anti-christ has manifested himself and reached the end of his blasphemous career; when the devil is bound and cast into the abyss,—and the devil being bound we may be sure his angels will be bound also; when all the wicked helpers of the Anti-christ are overcome and punished; and when the faithful witnesses are raised from the dead, Christ's enemies shall become his footstool, His kingdom shall be fully established, and He shall reign over the earth with His redeemed saints for a thousand years. "And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David," said the angel Gabriel unto Mary, "and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no

end."—Luke i. 32, 33. As we have spoken of Christ's reign continuing for a thousand years, it may seem to some that His reign will cease at the end of that period, and that there is a contradiction between this statement and the passage just quoted, which declares His reign to be everlasting and His kingdom to be without end. But there is no real contradiction, it is only apparent; the reign of Christ, as God, will indeed be an everlasting reign; for the eternal will follow the Millennial, the general resurrection and the judgment of the great white throne taking place between the two periods. So the kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom; but before the eternal commences, properly so called, it will be preceded by the Millennial. Hence there is no real disagreement between our remarks, when we speak of Christ reigning a thousand years, and when we speak of Him reigning for ever. As regards His human nature, Christ was of Jewish descent; but in His divine nature, He was the Son of God, and was God: and in His human nature, He, once crucified for us, shall, in His risen and glorified humanity, reign as King over the twelve tribes of Israel, wonderfully brought together and united again in that glorious dispensation, and over all the nations of the world. This reign with His redeemed and glorified saints shall continue a thousand years. At the termination of that period, that reign shall cease; He will no longer reign as man, exalted and glorified; but He will thenceforward reign as God; He, as the divine Son, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, one God, will reign for ever and ever. It has been asked in the *Bible Banner* if there are any Scriptures that teach that the reign of Christ on David's throne is

measured by a thousand years. We answer, there are no passages that restrict Christ's reign to a thousand years to be found in the context of those which speak of His occupying the throne of David; but the *whole* truth on this subject we have to gather from *various* passages; Scripture has to be compared with Scripture to get a full view of the subject in all its phases. And sometimes words and phrases in one passage will have to be modified by those in another. From Rev. xx., it is evident that there is a reign with His saints, for a definite time, a thousand years. From other passages we learn that there will be no end to His reign. Then other passages show that that reign with His saints will be on the earth, or over an earthly people. Others again show that after that reign, the earth will be renewed, regenerated by fire, made anew; that the Saviour's human reign will terminate and that He will deliver up the kingdom to the Father. The conclusion is inevitable, that it is His peculiar reign, as the glorified man, on an earthly throne, over an earthly people, that is restricted to a thousand years; and that the eternal kingdom, is that which He has, as the Divine Son, with the Father, when God, as God, will be all in all.

These views are corroborated and amplified and made still more clear by William Kelly. He says, "During the Millennium He will abolish all opposing rule, subjecting to Himself every adversary and all things unto the glory of God the Father, for such is the ultimate object of His exaltation, as we see from Phil. ii. "For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." This exactly harmonizes with Rev. xx., xxi., where we find, first, the

reign of Christ, then death destroyed, and after that, the new heaven and earth, which is the time when Christ is said in 1 Cor. xv. 24, to deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father. Not that Christ will cease to reign divinely: but the special human reign of Christ will terminate—that is, His reigning for a given period over an earthly people, and the world at large, which the heavenly saints, in glory, will share along with Him. This will end. All the righteous will at last be in a risen or changed condition, all the wicked dead cast into the lake of fire, and the kingdom closes. Its surrender to God the Father in no way touches the personal glory of the Lord Jesus. The kingdom that Christ has during the millennium is not what He has as God, but as the risen man—as the One who was humbled, but has been exalted. This He delivers up to God, even the Father, that God,—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—may be all in all—*God*, as such, having the place of supremacy throughout eternity. But although the human and mediatorial kingdom of Christ will terminate, not so the divine kingdom; and therefore we, being made partakers of the divine nature, are said to reign for ever and ever."

Now the obvious meaning of the statement made by the angel Gabriel to Mary, which we have quoted, that Christ shall sit upon "the throne of his father David," is explained away by those who hold the common theory, and we are referred to Christ's spiritual reign. Yet the locality of David's throne was the earth, and the throne upon which Christ now sits is in heaven. This is making the throne of David and the throne of God identical, which is an awful abuse of the language of Scripture. Christ,

though king, has not yet taken the kingdom ; for Satan, though a usurper, is practically the ruler of this world. In this age Christ is seated on His Father's throne as Mediator, and by His Spirit He reigns in the hearts of those who receive Him as their Saviour ; and it is not till the Millennial age that He sits upon His own throne,—the throne which the Father will give unto Him.

The throne of the house of Israel has now been vacant two thousand four hundred years, Zedekiah being the last that reigned ; and his deposition is recorded in the following words : “ And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God. Remove the diadem, and take off the crown : this shall not be the same : exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it : and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is ; and I will give it Him.”—Ezek. xxi. 25—27. Now although from the time of Zedekiah till Christ appeared in the flesh, a period of about six hundred years, there was a regular line of descendants, yet not one of them actually occupied the throne. And according to this passage, no one will ever be able to establish his right to sit upon that throne till the Lord Jesus shall come again.

The throne of David was not given to Christ at His first advent ; that was not the time appointed for Him to take the kingdom ; that was the time of His humiliation, when He came to suffer and die as a sacrifice for the sins of the people. The multitude then cried, “ Away with Him,” for they did not desire to be under His rule. There was indeed one occasion, during a sudden burst of excited feeling, when they wanted to make Him a king ; but the

right time had not then come. Besides, when He receives the kingdom He will receive it, not from men, but from the Father.

“Thy kingdom come,” in the Lord’s prayer, is a phrase which means the setting up of a righteous government which Christ shall administer over all men, and when Christ shall be every where acknowledged as King, as supreme Governor and Lord of all. The prayer we so often hear for the extension of the kingdom, or the advancement of the kingdom, has no sanction in Scripture. It implies that it has already come, that it is now set up, when it is not; and that there will be a gradual spreading of it, when the teaching of the word is that it will be established all over the earth at the Lord’s coming; that He will at once claim universal dominion, and that with an overwhelming force He will break up all earthly kingdoms. If the kingdom has already come, if it is now here, there is no further need for the prayer, “Thy kingdom come.”

We have a prophetic utterance on this subject of great significance and importance in Jer. iii. 17: “At that time they shall call Jerusalem the *throne* of the Lord; and *all* the nations shall be gathered unto it.” To what period can this apply but to the future, the time when the kingdom is set up? It could not apply to the Mosaical dispensation, for the Gentile nations around were not then required to come together there. Still less can it apply to the gospel age, for in this age we can worship the Father anywhere and every where. It can only have a reference to the period when the Lord shall return to Zion, and when His throne shall be set up there.

In a conversation between Philip and Nathaniel, concerning Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Nathaniel was induced by his friend to approach Jesus. As he approached Him, Jesus exclaimed, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Curious to know how, or by what means, Jesus knew him, Nathaniel said, "Whence knowest thou me?" The answer of Jesus was very significant: "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." With this the light so fully flashed upon his mind, and his judgment was so deeply convinced, that Nathaniel emphatically declared, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel." Such a King he and others of his nation had long expected. And their expectation had been derived from their searching of the Old Testament Scriptures.

One of the terms frequently used to designate Jesus was the *Messiah*, which means *the Christ*, or *the Anointed*. And in this latter term more is implied than common readers are generally aware of. When Saul, who was Israel's first king, was appointed by Jehovah, it is said, "Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?"—1 Sam. x. 1. When Saul was rejected for disobedience, and David was chosen king, he also was anointed. "And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren; and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward."—1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13. These kings of Israel therefore, are called "*the Lord's Anointed*." So Jesus, in conformity with this custom, was anointed; but He

was anointed, not by any prophet, but by God Himself. Hence He is called the Christ ; that is, the Anointed. He was anointed the King of Israel. This the disciples understood, but they understood not the time when He was to take the kingdom.

But this view of the kingdom is thought to be set aside by the words in Luke xvii. 21. "The kingdom of God is within you," or as the margin has it, "In the midst of you." This expression occurs in the Saviour's answer to the pharisees, when they inquired of Him as to the time "when the kingdom of God cometh." Now what did the pharisees mean by the kingdom of God? Well, they could only mean that kingdom of which they had a knowledge. And their knowledge they obtained from two sources. They had read the Old Testament Scriptures, and they knew that Isaiah, and others among the prophets, had foretold that David's throne should again be set up and a kingdom be established. And they had heard Jesus and His followers tell of this kingdom. In a previous chapter it is recorded that the angel Gabriel said unto Mary, referring unto the Son whom she should bring forth, and whose name should be called Jesus, "And the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever." This was the kingdom that Jesus proclaimed. And this glad news His disciples were to publish everywhere. This kingdom was the great burden of prophecy. And they were all expecting this kingdom ; as a nation they were looking for it. Now it is very remarkable that the pharisees say not a word to Christ about the nature of this kingdom ; they do not ask what city will be its

head-quarters ; they do not ask what preliminaries will be necessary to its establishment, or how it will be inaugurated ; they doubtless felt satisfied on these points from the reading of the prophets ; their only concern seems to be to know *when* it should come. But that was the very point on which they were not to have information. That information was withheld from them for wise reasons. The prophets themselves who foretold this kingdom foretold also other events which should intervene, and which in their rise and development should occupy many centuries. And some of the events which should come to pass were to be an approximation to the end, or to the time of the setting up of this kingdom ; but the exact time they were not permitted to make known. And Christ Himself received no authority from the Father to make known that day and hour. He therefore did not satisfy them on that point, but simply spoke of one way in which the kingdom of God should not come, and of the kingdom being in the midst of them. That Christ by these latter words did not mean that the kingdom was literally in the midst of them, is evident from Luke xxi. 31, where, after enumerating certain things which should be the signs of His second coming, He says, “ Even so ye also, when ye see these things coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh.” This is absolute evidence that, in the strict sense of the word, the kingdom was not among them. The Saviour connects it with His second coming ; for it is only when the signs appear which precede His being seen coming in the clouds, that the kingdom of God will be nigh. Even then it will not actually have come, though the time of His coming will be near. The kingdom was among them only in

this sense, inasmuch as He who was to be the King was then among them, though they knew it not; and inasmuch as tidings of that kingdom had begun to be openly proclaimed, and men were called upon to seek it and obtain a preparation for it. The absurdity of the common rendering of this passage, and also of the common notion that Jesus here meant His spiritual reign in the heart, will be seen at once if we consider that He was personally addressing a class of men whom He considered the vilest and most depraved, inwardly rotten and full of deception. How could He say to them, “The kingdom of God is *within* you”? They rejected Him from the throne of their hearts. They were right in theory, so far as they expected the establishment of a kingdom; but their hearts were not right; they were blind to the fact that He who was to be Israel’s future King, was then in their midst; and they were equally blind to the fact that before the setting up of the kingdom, Christ was to die for the sins of the people, and long and weary ages of oppression, during Gentile supremacy, should be endured by the Jewish nation.

The Jews boasted of being the children of Abraham, and on account of their nationality seem to have regarded themselves as entitled to the kingdom; but Christ taught them the need of the new birth, or regeneration, in order to a fitness to enter therein. But He never intimated that they were in error as to the nature of the kingdom,—its being set up on the earth with Jerusalem for its head quarters, and their exaltation as a nation.

As a further objection to our view, some cite the passage, “My kingdom is not of this world.”—John xviii. 36. But this simply means, is not of a worldly nature. Francis

Lambert interprets this, “Not of this corrupted world, or age.” But if Christ meant the world in the sense of earth, or globe, it does not follow that His kingdom will not be in it. Christ was not *of* this world, yet He was *in* it. Addressing his disciples, Christ said, “Ye are not of the world.”—John xv. 19. It is the same word that is used in both passages. If from the former passage it is argued that the kingdom of Christ will not be on earth, we might with precisely the same show of reason argue, from this latter passage, that the Saviour’s followers were not on earth. Merely to mention this is to show its falsehood and absurdity. Yet the one argument is as sound as the other. The meaning of the Saviour is evident: His kingdom is unearthly in its origin and nature, in its laws and the great end to be accomplished by its existence.

Another passage often urged against this view is Rom. xiv. 17: “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Now this is a passage, demanding on its very surface, some explanation. “Righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost” are not things that exist outside of us. They are not things into which we enter. On the other hand, when we believe, they enter into us, which proves their spiritual nature. Our submission to Christ’s rule, our faith in His teachings and mediation, and our walking in the Spirit, are counted to us for righteousness, and thus believing and obeying, we have the consolations of the Spirit. This kingdom, therefore, is not the kingdom of which we are treating, and for which believers are looking. It is not the kingdom into which we hope to enter in the future. It is not the kingdom promised to the saints; for

the saints have already got this. Sanctified and made holy, the Spirit has inward rule, and in Him they possess peace and joy. But possessing this, they are heirs of the kingdom to come.

We are told further that our view of the kingdom is a carnal view. We reply, carnal or not, it is the view set forth in Holy Scripture, if any regard is to be paid to the plain language in which almost all Scripture on this subject is written. But it is not a carnal view. Though the kingdom will be on the earth, it will not be of the earth, but will be divine and heavenly in its origin. The objection is absurd, and foolish, and is scarcely worthy of notice. If the kingdom is Christ's, and He establishes it, and governs it, and everywhere administers righteous law, how can it be carnal? And Christ teaches that none shall enter the kingdom without being born from above; there must be a renewal of the heart, a renovation of the moral nature in order to obtain a fitness for it. The very idea of carnality, therefore, is excluded.

Some would have us believe that by the kingdom of Christ is meant the church of Christ; but this is not the teaching of the Holy Spirit. That the church cannot be the kingdom, is evident from Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the great image, which the prophet Daniel interpreted and declared the dream to be certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. According to that vision, it is after the fourth kingdom has existed, which all admit to be the Roman empire, and after that kingdom has been divided, and after other kingdoms have been formed out of it, and kings have been set over them, that the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom,—a fifth universal monarchy, the

setting up of which is represented by the stone cut out of the mountain, which broke the image in pieces in every part, showing that all earthly kingdoms shall be broken up, and all earthly kings dethroned, and only one kingdom;—the kingdom of God, and only one King,—the Lord Jesus Christ, shall exist under the whole heaven. But this fourth kingdom, in its divided form is not yet subverted, and the kingdom of Christ,—the fifth universal monarchy,—is not yet set up. But the church of Christ has been established eighteen hundred years. That was established when the fourth kingdom, or the Roman monarchy, was in full power. Therefore the church cannot be the kingdom of Christ here spoken of.

No Scripture ever identifies the church with the kingdom. The descriptions of the church are different from the descriptions of the kingdom. And the relations which men sustain in the church are different from those which they will sustain in the kingdom. In Acts xx. 17, we read of “the elders (presbyters) of the church, but we never read of the elders, or presbyters, of the kingdom. In Rom. xvi. 1, we read of “Phœbe our sister, who is a servant (deaconess) of the church that is at Cenchreæ,” but we never read of servants, or deacons, or deaconesses, in the kingdom. In 2 Cor. viii. 23, we read of “the messengers (apostles) of the churches,” but messengers, or apostles, of the kingdom is a phrase nowhere to be found. Then there are various things said in reference to the kingdom which are never said in reference to the church. In Dan. vii. 18, it is said that “the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever,” but such a thing is

never said of them in relation to the church. In Luke xii. 32, we read, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," but such language would be inappropriate if applied to the church, because it is the little flock that composes the church—the true church. In 1 Cor. xv. 50, we read "that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God," but that is not true of the church. In James ii. 5, we have the expression "heirs of the kingdom," but that is never used of the church.

The church, the true church, or body of Christ, is both found in all the churches. Hence we read of the churches in Scripture. "He went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches." "So the churches were strengthened in the faith."—Acts xv. 41; xvi. 5. "Let the women keep silence in the churches."—1 Cor. xiv. 34, "There is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches."—2 Cor. xi. 28. "John to the seven churches which are in Asia."—Rev. i. 4. But where do we read of the kingdoms? Nowhere. The kingdom is one kingdom.

As long as the church exists, there will be kings, and we are taught to honour them, and render them their due, and submit to their royal authority, when that authority does not clash with conscience or the law of God. But there will be no kings in the kingdom of Christ. He will be the only King. All other kingdoms shall be broken in pieces and consumed.

The church of Christ is to be non-resistant, is to suffer wrong rather than seek to be revenged on her enemies; but the kingdom of Christ will resist evil. If evil springs up, it will be dealt with in justice, and the evil doer

will be punished. There is then no Scripture authority for representing the church as the kingdom of Christ.

XXVII.

CHRIST'S COMING TO REIGN, VISIBLE.

CHRIST's coming to reign will be a visible one. On this point we speak definitely and positively, because the Scriptures do so. That He will be seen, and seen on this earth, is beyond question, if we take the word for our guide. The prophet Isaiah says, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously."—Isa. xxiv. 23. In the history of David, and in that of the prophets, Zion held a remarkable and conspicuous place. Now if the coming of the Lord to reign there is not to be a visible one, where is the propriety of speaking of the moon as being confounded, and the sun ashamed at the glorious manifestation? The prophet Zechariah, speaking of the day of the Lord, says, "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east."—Zech. xiv. 4. And Micah says, "For, behold, the Lord cometh forth out of His place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth."—Micah i. 3. From these passages it is evident that His coming will be personal and visible. It is reasonable to expect that as Christ when on this earth, was subjected to reproach, persecution, and

death, He should appear again on this earth to triumph over His enemies, and claim universal dominion.

“There is,” says Dr. Landels, “a peculiar fitness in the earth being selected to form, for a time at least, the future inheritance of the saints, and the head-quarters, so to speak, of the Saviour’s humanity. Was it not here that he suffered and died? And is it not meet that here He should be surrounded with the fruits of His soul’s travail? Was it not here that He effected the redemption of man? and is there not a propriety in His here receiving the acclamations of the redeemed? Was it not here that He vanquished principalities and powers? and is it not meet that here His triumph should be celebrated? Should not the scene of His sufferings be also the scene of His joy? Should not His throne be erected where His cross once stood? Should not the world that witnessed His shame witness His exaltation too? And when the inhabitants of other worlds gazed with intense interest on this as the scene of His humiliation and death, should they not behold in this same theatre the glorious consummation of His labours and pains?”

When Christ comes, the glory and brightness of His presence will cause the mountains to melt and the rocks to be rent asunder. In looking forward to that day, the prophet exclaims, “Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence.”—Isa. lxiv. 1, 2.

That the reign of Christ will be on the earth is proved

by Jer. xxiii. 5, 6: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, *the Lord our righteousness.*" We believe there is no difference of opinion among those who regard the authority of the Bible, as to who is meant by the "Righteous Branch." All understand that designation to belong to Christ. The title, "*the Lord our righteousness,*" could be given to none else. Yet the earth is to be the place of His reign. The words of the prophet evidently imply this. And there is abundant evidence that this refers to the second, and not to the first, advent of Christ. It is said that "in His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely," but soon after His first advent, they were overcome by Titus the Roman emperor. The besiege of Jerusalem took place in the year 70: and Judah and Israel were scattered into all the world. This prophecy, therefore, has never yet been fulfilled, nor will it be fulfilled till Jesus comes again, and reigns as King over the earth.

This view is further established by the words of the Psalmist. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, He shall appear in His glory . . . To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord."—Psa. cii. 16, 21, 22. This teaches that the Lord will appear in Zion. It is also confirmed by the prophet in Isa. xxv. 9: "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we

will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." This language will be natural on the lips of those who are privileged to see the Lord when He returns to Zion ; but we fail to see the propriety of such language if there is to be no personal appearance.

At the institution of the supper, when Christ broke bread and gave it to His disciples, and took the cup, and gave that to them, and requested them to eat of the one and sup of the other in remembrance of Him, during His absence, He said, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death *till He come.*" —1 Cor. xi. 26. This cannot mean a spiritual coming, for spiritually He has never been absent, and in that sense cannot be said to come. When He instituted the supper, He was with them personally, but was about to leave them ; and when He spoke of coming again, He meant, what His words naturally mean, and what they would naturally understand Him to mean, that He would come again personally. Till then, His followers are to observe that ordinance in remembrance of Him.

Christ spoke very plainly and familiarly to His disciples about going away and coming again. He told them He would go to prepare a place for them. "And if I go and prepare a place for you," said He, "I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." —John xiv. 3. Now to understand these words in any but their common sense meaning, would be to do violence to them. Every one understands their natural meaning. And they are beautiful in their simplicity. And the simplicity of the language, and the evident design of the language, and the occasion of the

words, and their connection all require that we should give to them their primary signification. We are forbidden by these circumstances to put one sense on His going away, and an opposite sense on His coming again. He went away personally and He will come again personally. That is the natural import of the Saviour's words.

But some tell us that Christ comes in death,—that He comes whenever a christian dies,—and that when we die, *that* will be Christ's coming to us. Such talk is only found on the lips of those who are grossly ignorant of the Scriptures on this subject. To speak of Christ's coming as set forth in Scripture being a coming to us in death, is worse than nonsense ; it is perverting and distorting God's holy word. Death has been coming to some of the saints every day and every hour for years and ages and centuries past, laying them away one by one in the cold grave. That is what death has been doing, and is still doing. But when Christ comes, He raises all the millions of sleeping saints in a moment. Death, at his coming, brings decay and corruption and sorrow ; Christ, at His coming, brings life and immortality and joy. At the coming of death, death has the victory over us ; but at the coming of Christ, we shall have the victory over death. To confound the coming of Christ with death is awful trifling.

C. H. Spurgeon, in an article in the Christian Herald, says, "I believe Christ will appear in person. I can never tolerate the idea of His second coming being merely a spiritual coming. That always seems to me to be the most transparent folly that can possibly be put together, because Christ cannot come spiritually ; He always is here : 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'"

Christ's spiritual coming never can be that which is spoken of in Scripture as the day of our release." These words of the great preacher cannot be disproved. Since Christ, by His Spirit, and according to His promise, is always present with His people, and since every individual believer bears testimony to His presence with him, which in this age can only be a spiritual presence, to talk of His future coming to reign over the nations as a spiritual coming is nothing less than nonsense.

But whether Christ will be always visible during His reign on the earth, we pretend not to say. Some think that His glorified humanity will be located on the earth during the thousand years. Dr. Landels, from whom we quoted on another page, seems to have this view. We quoted that paragraph because of the pertinency and excellency of its general statements without endorsing his view on this particular point. We think it probable that Christ will dwell chiefly in the holy city, new Jerusalem, and that He will sometimes send messengers to the earthly mount Zion, and execute plans, by His saints. It will by no means be necessary for the Lord to abide personally on this earth in order to administer the governmental affairs thereof. He may abide chiefly, so far as His personal presence is concerned, in the heavenly mansions, surrounded and worshipped by His glorified saints and by the holy angels, and yet be occasionally seen in the city of Jerusalem. He may generally make known His will, and govern the affairs of the nations, and execute His purposes through His saints and His angels. If Jehovah came down upon Sinai, when He gave commandments to Israel in the Mosaical dispensation, is there any thing incredible in the supposition that He

will sometimes descend upon mount Zion, when some special legislation, of vast importance to Israel and the surrounding nations, is needed in the Millennial dispensation? Indeed, on this point we think we are not left in doubt. In Psa.lxviii. 17, it is said, "The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." From this we learn that the Lord will manifest Himself to His people in Millennial times, as He manifested Himself in the time of Moses. Scripture is very emphatic in declaring that the Lord will govern the earth in that period. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."—Rev. xi. 15.

Jesus alone is qualified to rule in righteousness. The love of the truth, the love of purity is in Him. He is essentially and absolutely just, and wise, and good, and benevolent; and when He takes hold of the reins of government, there will be a perfect administration. There will be perfect laws, and they will be perfectly administered everywhere. If truth, and justice, and righteousness, and peace are to be constantly maintained in all the world during the Millennium, it is very clear that He who governs His chosen people in the holy land, must govern all the nations and peoples of the earth. There must be one King, one Head, one Ruler over all. Men will be human then as now, and though no longer subject to the power of the devil, they will still need the divine mercy, the divine word, the divine guidance, and the divine Spirit.

There are two things which will be peculiar to that dispensation which have never distinguished any previous

one. Satan will be put in chains, and will have no power to tempt or deceive the people. And Christ, with His saints, will govern the whole earth; and those who escape the terrible judgments which take place at the time of His coming—and the judgments just before and just after His coming—will be brought to acknowledge, and submit to, His authority.

Now, the authority of Christ is trampled upon ; His laws are disregarded ; His character is traduced, and dishonour is cast upon His name ; and because this is a dispensation of grace and mercy, rebels are borne with, and Christ is long-suffering toward them ; but in the ages to come, when Christ reigns as King, this will not be permitted.

Oh, it will be a blessed thing when the rule of the world is in the hands of one,—and that one the Lord Jesus,—in whom unerring wisdom, and unsullied holiness and essential goodness, and Almighty power combine.

XXVIII.

PROPHETIC DESCRIPTIONS OF HIS REIGN.

THE reign of Christ is described in a great number of passages, and it is described in language the most glowing and beautiful. “The prophecies respecting the kingdom of Messiah,” says Dr. J. Pye Smith, “its extent and duration, and the happiness of His innumerable subjects are in a much greater proportion than those which describe His humiliation to sufferings and His dreadful death.” A very graphic and glowing description of Christ’s coming

to reign is given in the ninety-seventh psalm. "The Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him ; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world : the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols : worship Him, all ye gods. Zion heard, and was glad ; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O Lord."—Verses 1—8.

The clouds that now darken the moral atmosphere will shortly be dispersed ; the glory and splendour of Christ's reign will soon be unveiled ; oppression will cease, and justice and righteousness and peace will be triumphant. Fire and sword, hailstones and earthquakes, crashing thunders and flashing lightnings, and other instruments and agencies will unite in the destruction of the Lord's enemies.

Some very instructive thoughts on this subject may be found in the second psalm ; most of which, on account of its importance, we will quote : "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing ? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto

them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost part of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."—Verses 1—9. This psalm teaches that the Messiah, the King, will be set upon the holy hill of Zion. He will have the world for His possession and dominion, and those who will not submit to His authority will be visited with His destruction. The heathen nations will be given to Him, but not all for conversion, not all as objects on whom to display love and mercy, but the more rebellious to be judged, and broken, and dashed in pieces. How ministers and writers can quote the 8th verse to prove the conversion of all the heathen to Christ, is something astounding. They would scarcely dare to misapply the words of any book as they misapply the words of the Bible. But there is evidence that some of the heathen nations will survive the destruction that will fall upon others; they will be spared that they may learn the knowledge of Jehovah. "And I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."—Isa. lxvi. 19.

In connection with this may be read Rev. ii. 25—27: "Howbeit that which ye have, hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and he that keepeth my works unto

the end, to him will I give authority over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of the potter are broken to shivers; as I also have received of my Father." This corresponds with verse 9 of this psalm. Both passages assert the same awful truth. Christ will destroy the rebellious and impenitent heathen, and under Christ, and by His authority, His saints will be the messengers and executors of His judgments. And great light is thrown upon these words in the Revelation by 1 Cor. vi. 2 : " Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world ? " and by 2 Tim. ii. 12 : " If we endure, we shall also reign with him ; " and by the Lord's words, spoken to the servant who was faithful during His absence in a far country, whither He had gone to receive for Himself a kingdom, and to return : " Have thou authority over ten cities."—Luke xix. 17. That the saints will rule with Christ over the nations during the Millennium is emphatically declared in Rev. xx. 4 : " And they lived, and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Now if Christ does not come till the end of the Millennium, till the end of earthly things,—if Christ does not come till the earth is burnt up and all the works that are therein,—if He does not come till the last and final judgment, in what sense can the saints judge the world, and have authority over the nations and over cities ? If that view is correct, and there is no second coming of the Lord till then, there will be no cities and no nations over which to have authority, and no world to judge.

But the risen and glorified saints will not we think dwell on the earth during the Millennium. They will look over, direct, and govern the affairs of the earth, under the

supreme leadership of their Lord ; but that will not necessitate their dwelling on the earth. Moses and Elijah, arrayed in glory and splendour, were seen on the mount ; yet the earth was not their abiding place ; they only came on a visit.

And here we may observe, by way of parenthesis, that the disciples favoured with the sight of Moses and Elijah on that memorable occasion, also saw, typically, the King and the future kingdom in its greatness and glory and splendour. In 2 Peter i. 16, the apostle says, "For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye witnesses of His majesty." He and James and John were eye witnesses of it in the holy mount. It was on the mount, at His transfiguration, when He received honour and glory from God the Father, that they saw Him, typically, coming in His kingdom. The wonderful sight of the transfiguration of Christ, therefore, may be regarded as the fulfilment of His own words, "Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom."—Matt. xvi. 28.

Many persons fall into error by inattention to the period to which certain passages in reference to the reign of Christ refer. There are passages which refer to the present period, to the mediatorial office of Christ and to His spiritual reign ; there are others,—and they are very numerous—which refer to the Millennial period, to His reigning with His people on the earth a thousand years ; and there are others which refer to the great future beyond the last judgment, when His kingdom and His reign shall

be eternal. The present period is the dispensation of the Spirit, and Christ's kingdom now is a spiritual kingdom and His reign a spiritual reign, and is limited to those who believe in His name. In the Millennial period, Christ's kingdom will be a visible kingdom on the earth, and His reign a personal reign, and His dominion as wide as the world. The kingdom of that period He will, at the close of the dispensation, deliver up to the Father; but the kingdom of the future beyond shall have no end. In the present period, or during this age, Christ, seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, reigns by His Spirit in the hearts of His true disciples; in the Millennial period He will reign over the earth, in mount Zion, which is before Jerusalem; and in the endless future following, He will reign as the Divine Son, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, one God, on the new earth, which will doubtless be the present earth renewed by fire, and remoulded by the creative energy of the Almighty.

XXIX.

ISRAEL'S FINAL REDEMPTION FROM THEIR ENEMIES, AND RESTORATION TO THEIR OWN LAND.

It was at different periods and for different sins that Israel were scattered among the nations. The ten tribes were dispersed for having given themselves up to the worship of idols, and up till now they are lost to the world, never having returned, and their whereabouts not being known.

It was for the sin of idolatry also that judgment was permitted to come upon Judah by the hand of king Nebuchadnezzar, when God disowned them, and indeed the whole nation, as His people, and permitted them to be taken into captivity. But a part of Judah returned to Jerusalem, and rebuilt the city, though they continued under Gentile rule. These were named Jews, and it was in their midst, or in the midst of their descendants, that Jesus, the Saviour, was born, and by them that He was rejected and crucified. And for their casting off the Messiah, God brought terrible judgments upon them by the hands of the Romans and scattered them into all nations ; and thus we find them at the present day.

With the vail still upon their eyes, and their hearts full of unbelief, will a part of the Jews return to Jerusalem. They will also be deceived by him who will shortly after be revealed as the Anti-christ, and will associate themselves with ungodly Gentile rulers, which will be the means of bringing down upon them the greatest calamities. The prince, or the Anti-christ, who makes a seven years' covenant with a portion of the Jews, will violate it in the middle of the seven years, and will cause their sacrifices and oblations to cease. During the first half of the seven years he will deceive them ; during the second half he will betray them and come out in his true character and violently oppose, oppress, and persecute them. From the 12th chapter of Zechariah, it is evident that the nations gathered against Jerusalem will be very numerous. The last state of the Jewish nation prior to their conversion, is to be the worst. Two parts that are in the land shall be cut off ; the third part shall remain, but shall pass through fiery

trials. They will undergo a terrible scourge after their return to Jerusalem. Much as they have already suffered as a nation, and greatly as they have been persecuted, their greatest sufferings doubtless will be just previous to their final redemption. And in their sufferings, inflicted by Divine wrath, they will have a deep sense of shame added to their sufferings from the knowledge that their enemies are aware of their sufferings, and rejoice in them; and they will pray that they may suffer in the same way. "All mine enemies have heard of my trouble; and they are glad that thou hast done it: thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me. Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them, as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions."—Lam. i. 21, 22. But the desolations of the unbelieving Jews which have been so great and so wide spread, and which at the last will deepen in intensity and gloom, will come to an end. The following passages appear to refer to their condition at that time:—"As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress 'against me.'"—Eze. xx. 33—38.

After the Divine purpose is fulfilled in the scourging of the Jewish nation for their transgressions, they shall be delivered from their oppressors, and their oppressors shall be made to drink of the cup of which they had drunk. Those who have brought desolations upon them will themselves be made to suffer desolations as terrible, or perhaps even more terrible. "Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of thy people, Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury ; thou shalt no more drink it again ; but I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee."—Isa. li. 22, 23.

These terrible trials of the last days will issue in the purification of the Lord's people. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin."—Isa. i. 25. "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver ; and He shall purify the sons of Levi ; and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years."—Mal. iii. 3, 4.

Men often do their own will, and seek the accomplishment of their own selfish purposes without the least thought of accomplishing any divine purpose ; yet God uses them in the fulfilling of His designs, and overrules their actions in bringing about certain events.

It is not always that which is good which overthrows that which is evil. In no sense does God approve of evil, but He sometimes makes use of one evil to overthrow another.

We have the certainty of Israel's redemption in connection with the future kingdom made very clear in Psa. lxxxix. 3, 4, 34—37: “I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up my throne to all generations. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.” Now can this be fulfilled except in Christ? Certainly not. And that it will be fulfilled in Christ is definitely taught in the New Testament: “The Lord shall give unto him the throne of His father David.”—Luke i. 32. And does not this furnish evidence of the restoration of the Jews, and their perpetuity as a nation? You admit that David reigned in Jerusalem, in Palestine; this is a matter of history which every one believes. Then since the perpetuity of his throne is foretold, since it is declared that it shall be as the sun before Jehovah, why interpret this altogether differently,—that which is now history, and that which is shortly to become history, but which is yet a prophecy, but refers to the same matter and to the same country? There is no evidence that one referred to the earth and the other to heaven.

God has solemnly promised that as a nation Israel shall never be finally cast off. He has declared their continuance and stability to be just as certain as the endurance of the sun and moon and stars. “Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which

divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar ; the LORD of hosts is His name : if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever."—Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. He has further declared their permanence as a people to be as sure as it is impossible for us to measure the heaven above, or search out the foundations of the earth beneath. " Thus saith the LORD ; if heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the LORD."—Jer. xxxi. 37.

The gathering together again of Israel after so long a dispersion, their revival as a nation, their resurrection to a new life, and their return to a holy obedience are what the apostle includes in the term " seasons of refreshing," Acts iii. 19. These blessed times follow, and are the result of their acceptance as a nation of the Christ, and their sincere repentance for having once rejected Him.

The Lord will employ human agency in the gathering of Israel. " Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people : and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord : for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me." " And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and

upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord."—Isa. xlix. 22, 23 ; lxvi. 20.

But not only will the Lord make use of human agency, He will also put forth His own divine agency. The gathering will be completed as it were by a miracle. "And the Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea ; and with his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria ; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt."—Isa. xi. 15, 16.

Israel, or Ephraim, or the ten tribes, having no connection with Judah, or the Jews, in putting to death the Lord Jesus, will doubtless not suffer as will the Jews, in the terrible judgments inflicted on Jerusalem during the reign of the Antichrist. And the restoration of the ten tribes will be effected by different means from those by which the restoration of the Jews will be effected. The closing verses of Isaiah xxvii., seem to refer to their restoration. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord at the holy mount at Jerusalem."—Verses 12, 13. Jer. xxxi. 6—9, appears to refer to the same event : "For there

shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God. For thus saith the Lord ; Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations : publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaleth with child together: a great company shall return thither. They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble: for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my first born." It seems that the disobedient among these tribes will not be permitted to enter the land. They will be purged out from among them. While the great tribulation is in progress, and many of the Jews are being cut off, the ten tribes seem to be in the very act of returning, and they seem to reach the land shortly after the terrible judgments. The joyous results of their return on those who suffer, but still live through, the persecutions and judgments of that period, are strikingly set forth in the following passages :—" Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee : and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of

the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages, that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth ; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst ; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them : for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far : and, lo, these from the north and from the west ; and these from the land of Sinim. Sing, O heavens ; and be joyful, O earth ; and break forth into singing, O mountains : for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands ; thy walls are continually before me. Thy children shall make haste ; thy destroyers and they that madethee waste shall go forth of thee. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold : all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away."—Isa. xlix. 7—19.

It will be observed from the passages we have quoted that the sacred writers sometimes make use of symbols, or

employ figurative language, to set forth facts. It is beyond question that Israel's and Judah's restoration is repeatedly foretold. If the plainest prophecies are to be relied upon, the period will come,—and we think it is not far off,—when their restoration will be an accomplished fact; yet it is not unfrequently taught by symbols and in language highly figurative. Eze. xxxvii., uses a symbol for the joining of Judah and Ephraim, or the two tribes and the ten tribes. We must remember that a symbol is not a reality; equally important also is it not to forget that the thing set forth by the symbol *is* a reality.

It behoves us to read and, as far as possible, understand the prophetic word respecting Israel. A large part of Scripture is taken up with their history, with their idolatry, and their unbelief and sin in rejecting the Messiah, with the chastisement with which they were visited for their iniquity, with their dispersion into all nations, and with the divine purpose to gather them together again as a nation in their own land. Superficial readers of the Bible do not discern the meaning of the Spirit. There must be diligent and patient searching of the word, and comparing one part with another.

The conquering of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar began what Christ designates “the times of the Gentiles;” and until those times be fulfilled, Jerusalem is to be oppressed by the Gentiles. Scripture gives us no history of the Gentiles except as that history is interwoven with that of Israel. And when the whole of Israel were scattered, at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, there was a suspension of any minute history of the Gentile nations. That suspension has continued from that period, and it is

continued until the gathering of Israel again to their own land. At that point, Scripture again takes up Gentile history ; it takes it up as it then stands closely related to Jewish history. It gives the reign of the last Gentile king, and the Jewish confederacy with him, and his rise and fall as the Anti-christ.

This statement is confirmed by Mr. Newton. From the crucifixion to the present time, “ all *detailed* history respecting both Israel and the nations,” he says, “ is suspended, not only in Daniel, but in all Scripture. During this period, no dates are given, no names recorded. Many kings and mighty conquerors have arisen among the Gentiles since Jerusalem was extinguished ; but none of them are mentioned in Scripture, because none are connected with God’s nation in Jerusalem.” “ But as soon as Israel is again gathered back to Jerusalem for judgment, and nationally re-exist in their land and city, prophecy resumes its detail. The covenant made with the Anti-christ . . . will be a sign of their re-constitution as a nation, and then the hebdomads will again resume their course.”

Thus though now scattered into all countries, Israel and Judah shall be brought again to their own land ; they shall be one in heart, and shall live for one object, and never more, as a people, forsake the Lord. “ And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and

shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." —Isa. xi. 11, 12. "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely." "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them." "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." —Jer. xxxii. 37, 39, 41. "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land." —Eze. xxxvi. 24. Thus the distinctive features of the Jewish nation will never be lost.

The land which God originally gave to Abraham and his seed shall become the inheritance of Israel in the Millennial period. Ezekiel was commanded to say unto the house of Israel, "Thus saith the Lord God . . . And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." —Eze. xxxvi. 22, 28. And that land, much of which has been so long waste and desolate, shall become fruitful; and cities which have been destroyed shall be rebuilt, and the inhabitants shall be numerous. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing." —Isa. xxxv. 1, 2. "Thus saith the Lord God; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause

you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden ; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it."—Eze. xxxvi. 33—36.

When Israel are dwelling in their land, without walls around their villages, and having neither bars nor gates, Gog, the prince of Meshech and Tubal, or the prince of Rosh, believed to be the Russian empire, attracted by the prosperity of Israel, and greedy of their silver and gold, their cattle and goods, will come with all his army as great company, as a storm, and like a cloud to cover the land, to take a spoil. He will come with Persia, Ethiopia, and Lybia ; Gomer, and all his bands ; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands ; and many people with him, to take a prey. But the Lord will make it known that He is in the midst of His people by signally destroying their enemies.

But plain as these passages are, and others, equally plain which we have not quoted, Israel's restoration to their own land is denied. Many persons in the various sects deny it ; and in America it is denied, we presume almost generally by a sect of people calling themselves Adventists, as the denial of it is laid down as one of their distinctive principles. How far will not some go in torturing and denying Holy Scripture to give a semblance of truth to some preconceived theory. In the declaration of principles by

the Mutual General Conference of Adventists at Albany, N. Y., April 29th, 1845, one principle laid down is this: "That the only restoration of Israel, yet future, is restoration of the saints to the earth, created anew, when God shall open the graves of those descendants of Abraham who died in faith, without receiving the promise, with the believing Gentiles, who have been grafted in with them into the same olive tree—and shall cause them to come up out of their graves, and bring them, with the living, who are changed, into the land of Israel." 2 Kings xvii. and 2 Chron. xxxvi., are adduced to show that the Jews "were carried captive among the heathen nations by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon." Jer. xxix. 11, 14, is adduced to show that God promised to restore them again; and Neh. vii. 6—73, is quoted to show that "they were restored and rebuilt Jerusalem and the waste places." Then Jer. xix. 11, and Luke xxi. 24, are quoted to show that "God again threatened their dispersion, with no promise of restoration." But neither of these passages denies their restoration, and one of them actually implies it when the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, in their comment on Isaiah xi. 11, say, "Therefore the coming restoration of the Jews is to be distinct from that after the Babylonish captivity, and yet to resemble it. The first restoration was *literal*, therefore so shall the second be; the latter, however, it is implied here, shall be much more universal than the former." Besides, that the restoration promised in the numerous passages we have given has not yet taken place, is evident from the fact that the peculiar blessings which were to accompany that restoration, have never yet been

experienced. Further, if the twelve tribes are not to be literally gathered, and if they are never to exist again as a nation, how can the apostles exercise authority over them in the Millennial dispensation, as promised in Matt. xix. 28 ? and further, it should be remembered that the promise—the Lord made to Abraham that his seed should possess the holy land was definite and unconditional. It was not made to depend upon their obedience,—upon their observance of the law. “ *Unto thy seed,*” said Jehovah, “ will I give this land.”—Gen. xii. 7.

Then the fact that the Gentiles who have believed in Jesus have become “ the spiritual seed of Abraham,” is no evidence that the promises made to Israel according to the flesh, will not receive a literal accomplishment. There is no intimation in any part of the New Testament that such a result follows from that premiss. The conclusion is arrived at without any Scriptural authority. What theory might not be established from Scripture, if such a mode of interpretation were admissible ? Such a method of interpretation is absolutely forbidden by the fact that the numerous blessings promised to Israel, and promised in such a multitude of passages, are promised to the Israel that have been scattered into all the earth, and of whom many have been all through the ages reproached, oppressed, trodden down, and made a bye-word. The evidence is abundant and overwhelming that Israel, as a people, have always been, and will always continue distinct from the Gentiles. But all this is thought to be set aside by what is said in respect to the spiritual seed of Abraham.

In reference to the Jews possessing again their own

land, a French newspaper, some time ago, published the following:—"Judging by reports," says the writer, "which appear tolerably well confirmed, the Jews are little by little retaking possession of their ancient patrimony. Eighty years ago the Sublime Porte permitted residence in the holy city to only three hundred Israelites. Forty years ago this number was raised, but the Jews were obliged to reside in a special quarter of the city which was their name. This last restriction, however, disappeared in its turn ten years ago, and since then the Jews have bought up all the land in Jerusalem that could be bought, and have even built entire streets of houses outside the walls. Synagogues and Jewish hospitals have multiplied. The German Jews have no less than sixteen charity associations, and in the interior of the city one may count already twenty-eight congregations. Two journals have been established.

"In the Rothschild and other Jewish hospitals 6,000 patients are ministered to annually. A Venetian Jew has given 60,000 francs to found a school of agriculture in Palestine. Baron Rothschild, at the time of the last loan of 200,000,000 francs made to Turkey, accepted as security a mortgage on the whole of Palestine. Owing to the Jewish immigration the population of Palestine has doubled during the last ten years."

Statements similar to several of these were published by an American paper. The *New York Christian Advocate*, of August 28th, 1879, states that "formerly the Turkish government allowed only 300 Jews to dwell in Jerusalem. Within the last ten years restrictions have been removed, and now over 13,000 inhabit their ancient capital. It is

now stated that they have bought up the old houses, and built up a large number of new, and have established schools and hospitals."

Does not all this furnish good reason for believing that the day may not be very distant when the Jews as a nation shall regain Jerusalem, and when it shall cease to be trodden down by the Gentiles?

The wasting of the Turkish empire has already been preparing the way for the Jews again to inhabit their own land; and soon, either before or after, that empire is overthrown, the way will be open for them to establish themselves once more as a nation in Palestine. Some think this is indicated by Rev. xvi. 12: "And the sixth poured out his bowl upon the great river, the river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up that the way might be made ready for the kings that come from the sun rising;" but allusion is made here, not to the decay of the Mohammedan power, but to the time of the gathering to the great battle against the Lord, when the way is prepared for the eastern kings and their armies to approach the terrible scene by the drying up of the river. We understand this language literally. See Rev. ix. 14—16.

Both popery and Mohammedanism, one in the west and the other in the east, arose near the same period, early in the seventh century, and there is reason to believe their destruction will be near each other as to time. Their cursed career must be near its close.

XXX.

ISRAEL'S REPENTANCE.

AFTER their wonderful deliverance from the power of the Anti-christ, and the complete overturning of their foes, and their restoration to their own land, there will be a sincere and general repentance amongst Israel, and a general turning unto the Lord. It will be a genuine submission, and will result in a willing obedience to the divine government. After the Lord Himself has come down and sought to destroy all the nations that shall come against Jerusalem, He "will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications ; and they shall look," says He, "upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. And the land shall mourn, every family apart ; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart ; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart ; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart ; the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart ; all the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart."—Zech. xii. 10-14.

When at the cross, in the midst of His murderous enemies, and suffering the most intense agony, Jesus prayed for their forgiveness, because they were crucifying Him in ignorance ; they knew not what they were doing ; they knew not that they were putting to death their best

friend, and Him who was to be their future King and Deliverer. At His second coming the Jewish race will be led to discover their great error and sin; it is no marvel that their lamentation will be deep and general. They are not given up: there will be hope for them in that day, for their emotions will be the result of true penitence.

In Paul's day there was a veil upon the heart of the Jews, and all through the ages until this present day, that veil has remained upon their heart; and it will never be removed from them, as a nation, until the Lord their King shall come visibly to their deliverance. With all the efforts that have been made for their conversion, very few Jews, comparatively, have been won for Jesus. It is only now and then that we hear of any receiving Christianity. Ordinary means will never convert them. Saul was so persistent in his unbelief that he needed a miracle, a sight of Him whom he had persecuted, to turn him from the error of his way. And so the descendants of Judah generally will never believe till they see. It will be the sight of Him whom they crucified that will cause them to wail and mourn, and convince them of their sin. Then it will be true, but not till then, that a nation shall be born in a day. Their conversion to Christ, as a people, will indeed be a sudden conversion. It is not, you will perceive, under the Spirit's dispensation that the Jews are to turn unto the Lord, but when the Lord Himself shall appear. It is when they *look* upon Him whom they have pierced, that they are to mourn. Particular reference is made to this people, and to this period, in the prophecy of John: Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and *they which pierced* Him."—Rev i. 7.

Nothing can be taught more clearly than that, as a nation, the Jews are to be saved; that they are to be saved after they return to their own country; that before their salvation is accomplished, the Anti-christ and the kings of the earth with their armies will fight against them; that their enemies thus gathered will be overcome and destroyed by divine interposition; and that their deliverance and exaltation and supremacy as a nation will follow. But their wonderful conquest and triumph and deliverance instead of elating them, will soften and subdue them. The goodness of God will lead them to great searchings of heart, to self-abasement, to confession of sin, and a loving allegiance and obedience.

A portion of the Jews, in that last terrible conflict, dwelling outside, and not within, the walls of the city, will be found amongst the enemies of Jerusalem. But when the Lord comes to save Jerusalem, He will manifest His mercy to this part of Judah; will fill their hearts with sorrow and penitence for their unbelief and sin, and will bring salvation to them first. "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, and also against Judah shall He be which shall be in seige against Jerusalem."—(See margin.) Zech. xii. 2. See also verses 4—7.

When Israel is thus restored, Jehovah will call upon the nations to witness their restoration. Their fall, and the calamities with which they have been visited, have been known through the world, and therefore He would have their rise and their blessed state to be also as widely known. "Here the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattereth Israel will

gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he."—
Jer. xxxi. 10, 11.

XXXI.

THE EFFECTS OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION AND REPENTANCE.

THE effects of Israel's restoration and repentance will be very extraordinary, and the Lord describes them in a manner wonderfully minute and graphic. "Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together; for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."—Jer. xxxi. 12—14. They will remember their former trouble, and calamity, and desolation, and the wonderful contrast shall fill them with delight. They will have blessings both temporal and spiritual in such abundance that their joy shall be great. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like



them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south.”—Psa. cxvi. 1—4. Thus after their restoration, they shall rejoice in the Lord, their Redeemer and Deliverer.

The Lord will publicly acknowledge them as his children. “And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.”—Hosea i.10.

When Israel are received again into the divine favour in the latter day, all the nations of the world having tidings of the wonderful change and prosperity and happiness, great beneficial effects, of a moral and spiritual nature, will be wrought on the nations. They will thereby be led to know and fear Jehovah. Out of numerous passages which set forth these results, we will simply give the following:—“And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.”—Jer. xxxiii. 9. “And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.” “Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord God; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt

thou not know it?....And thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes....Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.”—Eze. xxxvi. 23; xxxviii. 14, 16, 23.

In every land where Israel have been reproached and persecuted, will God cause them to have praise. “And I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame....for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.”—Zeph. iii. 19, 20.

XXXII.

THE GREATNESS AND THE GLORY OF THE NATION OF ISRAEL.

DURING the thousand years' reign, the nation of Israel will be the greatest of all the nations of the earth. It will occupy a supreme position, and will be enriched with the wealth of the Gentiles. The prophet Isaiah says, “And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee: for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish ; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted."— Isa. ix. 10—12. The prophet Micah also says, "In that day, saith the Lord, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halteth a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation : and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion ; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." "The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might."—Micah iv. 6—8 ; vii. 16.

Now when this prophet declares so plainly that the Lord shall reign over them in mount Zion, is it honest to give a figurative meaning to it ? It is the same prophet who prophesied in another chapter of the birth of Christ at His first advent, and declared He should come out of Bethlehem. Will those who say that the former will not receive a literal accomplishment, dare to say that the latter did not receive a literal accomplishment ? Certainly not. But if Christ was literally born in Bethlehem, as Micah foretold, will He not also literally reign in mount Zion, as Micah also foretold ? From the foregoing passages then it is evident that in the Millennial state, Israel will evidently occupy a higher position than any of the Gentiles. But though the prosperity of Israel will be great, and will be known through the world, yet they will not thereby become proud. They will continue meek and humble and give all the glory to God. See Zeph. iii. 11.

As Jerusalem will then be supreme among the nations,

other nations will receive from Jerusalem laws and regulations for their guidance. And the authority and rule it will exercise will always be just and beneficent. Christ, as King over the whole world, will be the Lawgiver, and His saints who will be subordinate rulers under Him, will carry out fully all His wishes and plans. No injustice, no unrighteousness will be allowed to prevail.

Jew and Gentile, under the present dispensation, are both one ; they are called to the same blessedness ; they are under the same moral government ; there is the same Saviour for them, and the same heaven for those who believe ; but in the Millennial dispensation, as in the Old dispensation, there will be a wide difference between Jew and Gentile.

And the Jews when converted to God, shall carry the knowledge of Jehovah to the heathen nations that know not God. Jehovah Himself says, through His servant Isaiah, "And they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."—Isa. lxvi. 19.

Zion and Jerusalem will be the most favoured during the Millennium ; these will be the great centre where divine communications will be made, and from this centre commandments will be sent forth to the nations around, and thus all the nations will be blessed.

Holy Scripture very plainly associates the blessings of the Millennial age with Israel's restoration. This will be made further clear by an attentive consideration of a portion of Rom. xi. "Now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles ; how much more their fulness? . . . For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving

of them be but life from the dead? . . . Thou wilt say then, Branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; by their unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by thy faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they continue not in their unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wast cut out of that which is by nature a wild olive tree, and wast grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant of this mystery, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that a hardening in part hath befallen Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel shall be saved: even as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: and this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."—Verses 12, 15, 19—27. The apostle teaches here, 1. That great blessings have resulted to the Gentiles from the fall of Israel. They have been made rich by Israel's poverty. Through the casting away of the natural branches, the glorious doctrine of reconciliation has been proclaimed to the Gentile world. 2. Christ came to His own, the Jews, but they rejected Him; and rejecting Him, the apostles were commanded to preach Him to the world. 3. That as the Gentiles gained great advantages by the casting away of Israel, they will by their restoration

gain advantages still greater. The receiving of Israel again shall be "life from the dead." Their fulness shall be the means of greater riches than their fall. 4. From this it is evident that we are not to look for Millennial blessedness till Israel's restoration.

These things will be further evident by considering the import of the several terms employed in these passages. By the branches of the wild olive tree is meant the professing part of the gentile world, or what is called Christendom. By the natural branches is meant Israel. Now the natural branches, because of unbelief, were broken off; God did not spare them, but dealt with them in severity. And God has promised to deal in goodness towards Christendom, or the branches of the wild olive tree, if they continue in His goodness. But He has threatened to cut them off also if they continue not in His goodness. God has further promised that if Israel, the natural branches, abide not still in unbelief, but have faith in His Son, they shall be again grafted into their own olive tree. God has also given them a covenant that the Deliverer shall come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and so save all Israel.

With this teaching of Paul's corresponds exactly that of James, where he says, "Symeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is

called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from the beginning of the world."—Acts xv. 14—18. Here James teaches that God's visitation of the Gentile world was to take out of them a people for His name ; that after this the rebuilding of David's tabernacle is to take place ; and that this shall be the occasion of the residue of men seeking the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom His name is called, or who shall become His worshippers. These statements accord beautifully with those in the eleventh of Romans.

XXXIII.

ISRAEL'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD SAVING AND UNIVERSAL.

IN the Millennial period *all* Israel shall have a saving knowledge of Jehovah. The Lord's people shall walk uprightly before Him. They shall be wholly sanctified and made holy. And there shall be no return to their former state ; they shall be preserved in righteousness. "Thy people also" says Isaiah, "shall be all righteous."— Isa. lx. 21. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," says Jehovah, " and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."—

Eze. xxxvi. 25—27. “In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.”—**Jer. 1. 4, 5.**

In the new covenant which the Lord made with His people, He says, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel; and with the house of Judah But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”—**Jer. xxxi. 31, 33, 34.** Now this covenant, it must be borne in mind, was made with the whole house of Israel, and not with the Gentiles. The peculiar blessings promised in the Millennial age are promised simply to Israel, Israel then, at that period, will be a very different people from what they once were, and from what they are still. They will then be subdued, and will be humble, obedient, believing, and truthful. God will regard them as His peculiar people, and also their offspring. “For they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.”—**Isa. lxv. 23.**

It would seem that throughout the whole period of the

Millennium all Israel shall have God's law in their hearts, and make it the rule of their lives. Their knowledge of Him shall be saving and sanctifying. "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children."—Isa. liv. 13.

Everything even in its outward appearance, whether in the street, or the house, or the shop, shall bear the marks of sanctity. Private life as well as public life, family life as well as social life shall all be holy. "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD: and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts."—Zech. xiv. 20, 21. And all their blessings, temporal and spiritual, will come to them through Christ, through his atonement and intercession. See Jer. xxiii. 6; xxxi. 31.

XXXIV.

But general as a state of righteousness will be, there not being one of all Israel but what will know the Lord, disobedience will not be utterly put away. Rebellion will sometimes manifest itself, but will be confined, we think, to the Gentiles. The words of the prophet, in Isa. xxvi. 10, prove that there will be some exceptions to the universal

righteousness. "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." Under the righteous administration of Christ, some will rebel. Though in a land of integrity and holiness, and in the midst of a just and virtuous nation, they will not bow before, and subject themselves to, His majesty. In Isa. lxv. 20, the prophet further says, speaking of the blessed state of Israel, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old: but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." It seems clear from this that holy as the Lord's people will be, and universal as a state of holiness will be, there will be some exceptions, but confined, we think, to the Gentiles, as already intimated; some will come under the designation of *sinners*. But in the Millennial age, if evil springs up, it will not be tolerated; it will at once be marked and justice meted out to the transgressor.

There is indeed a passage which would seem to exclude the possibility of sin at that period whether among the Jews or the Gentiles. The prophet Isaiah says, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. xi. 9. "But light is thrown on this passage by a similar one in Habakkuk. "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Hab. ii. 14. It would seem that it is not an experimental, or a saving acquaintance with the Lord that is meant in this place, but a knowledge of His glory as it will then be manifested in Jerusalem.

Though the Millennial will be a very different dispensation from the present, yet truth is immutable, and will be the same then as now. In the Millennium men must be saved by Christ, through faith in His blood as an atonement for sin, if saved at all.

XXXV.

THE BLESSED EFFECTS OF THE MILLENNIAL REIGN.

THE joy of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be increased in that wonderful day. The end of His sufferings and death upon the cross will then have been gained. The millions of the redeemed will then be gathered around Him, and He will be glorified in them. He will delight in them, and they will delight in Him. He will then walk in triumph where He had once walked in sorrow. He will then be honoured on the throne, as King of the whole earth, where once He was reproached, and mocked, and crucified.

The saints of God during the Millennial period, will attain a great age. In proof of this we must quote part of a passage just quoted for another object. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old." That is, he who dies at the age of one hundred years, will be regarded but as a child. In verse 22 of the same chapter, the prophet represents the Lord as saying, "For as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of

their hands." The longevity of that blessed period will be so great that persons will be comparatively young at what is now considered a very old age. The same is taught in Zechariah. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age."—Chap. viii. 4.

Some have thought and said that there will be no death during the Millennium. We remember hearing an aged minister, who had considerable knowledge of this subject, say, "There can be no death where Christ is." Some writers also, who have made prophecy a special study, are of the same opinion. They say there is no Scripture proof that the righteous die during the thousand years. "Therefore," says one of these writers, "if they die not during the Millennium, there are no righteous to be raised at the end of it. The resurrection at the end remains, consequently, for the wicked dead solely. The righteous will be raised before the Millennium, the wicked after it. The just who live during the reign of Christ are not called to die at all, as far as Scripture informs us. We may be sure that these Millennial saints will be changed into the likeness of Christ,—they will be transplanted into the new heavens and earth." From Eze. xxxvii. 23, it is thought that because Israel will not sin, none will die. But on this point, Scripture is not sufficiently definite, or we do not sufficiently understand it, to enable us to speak dogmatically. It is true part of Isa. xxv. clearly refers to that glorious day, and the prophet declares, "He will swallow up death in victory." Verse 8. But occasionally in the prophets, things that belong to the thousand years' reign

and things that belong to the eternal state are mixed up ; and we think it is so in this chapter on this particular point. The Millennial saints will not have entered upon the eternal state, but the church, or body of Christ, who reign over the Millennial saints, *will* have entered upon that state, for they will have been resurrected or changed ; and this passage may be only applicable to those raised from the dead. The apostle Paul seems thus to have regarded it ; for he quotes the very language in 1 Cor. xv. 54, when treating of the resurrection of believers. "Death is swallowed up in victory." Bishop W. R. Nicholson thinks that Isa. xxv. 8, the same as 1 Cor. xv. 54, refers to the resurrection. The latter part of Isa. xxxiii. appears also to have a reference to that day, where speaking of Zion and Jerusalem, the prophet says, "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick : the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."—Verse 24. Now if there will be no sickness then, we should conclude there will be no death, unless men die without disease from extreme old age, or simply from the decay of nature. This passage certainly seems to corroborate the opinion that there will be no death among the righteous. W. Kelly's exposition of Isa. lxv. 20, previously quoted, if it is the true one, favours this view. He says, "The meaning is, that if a person dies at a hundred years old, he will still be comparatively a child ; and that even when death occurs at that age, it is only as the result of an express curse of God. Thus will it be during the Millennium." But Isa. lxv. 20, is susceptible of another exposition, and which, while it appears more natural, more in harmony with the terms employed, intimates that there will be death among the righteous.

We will notice the several terms of the passage in order. "There shall be no more thence an infant of days." We see not how this phrase can be taken literally, as it would preclude any births during the thousand years, and consequently any increase of inhabitants; for the Hebrew word denotes, according to Barnes, "a child, a sucking child." The Septuagint renders it, "Nor shall there be any more an untimely birth, and an old man who has not filled up his time." The meaning doubtless is, not that the people will not multiply, not that there will be no infants, but that there will be none who will die in infancy, in childhood or youth; that all shall be preserved from sickness and be blessed with length of days; that every man shall live out his days or his allotted time. But does not this imply that the old will die when they *have* filled their days? And to pass into the new earth in the eternal state, they must either die and be resurrected so as to have the animal body changed into a spiritual body, or they must undergo a change, without dying, equal to the resurrection. "For the child shall die an hundred years old." From this we infer, not that any will die in childhood, as that term is generally understood, but that anyone dying at the age of one hundred years, will be but a child compared with the length of days that men will live. This interpretation seems natural, and therefore true; but if it is, it is against the view that there shall be no death among the righteous. And the latter clause of the passage, which forms a contrast, is in favour of this interpretation. "But the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." This seems to imply that both classes of people die—saints and sinners—and that though many may reach to that age,

it is not an evidence of goodness. If they are sinners, they are under the divine displeasure; the curse of Heaven is upon them. And as one—a righteous man—who dies at the age of a hundred, is considered, or regarded but as a child, comparatively, the sinner dying at that age, dies thus early because he *is* a sinner; he is cut off in his wickedness, not living out half his days; his years are shortened because he has brought upon himself God's curse by his transgressions.

There are several other passages and arguments that may be urged against this view, that death will be unknown among the righteous during the thousand years. The forty-eighth psalm is a psalm for Millennial times, and the last verse shows that there will be death. That, at least, seems a fair inference from the words: "He will be our guide *even unto death.*" Paul's words in 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26, are also to the point. "For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." The very construction of this passage implies that the restoration, under the reign of Christ, will be a work of time,—that it will not be accomplished all at once,—that the putting down of all His enemies will not be done at once, and that the last that shall be destroyed will be death. It implies a progressive work. Hence it implies that during the Millennium there will be death,—that there will be other enemies besides death; that other enemies will be put down first; that death will hold its sway longer than the rest; that it will be the last that will be abolished. But in the eternal reign that follows, it will be a thing unknown. In respect to it, we have the emphatic.

declaration, "And death shall be no more."—Rev. xxi. 4. Then in the judgment of the great white throne, which is plainly after the Millennium, some of the dead who are judged seem to be righteous dead. John says, "And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire."—Rev. xx. 15. The fair inference from this is, that some *will* be found written in the book of life, and therefore will escape the second death. But if any are raised from the dead at that judgment who are found written in the book of life, when did they die? They cannot be those who slept in Jesus prior to His coming, for all the dead in Christ are raised to life at His appearing, and before the Millennium commences. Is it not fair to conclude that some will be in the general resurrection at the end of the thousand years, accepted and saved because found written in the book of life, who died during that period? But we admit there may have been many in heathen lands, from the beginning all down through the ages, who according to their light have feared God and worked righteousness, and therefore have been accepted of Him, but who will not form a part of the church, or the bride of Christ, and therefore will not be counted among those who sleep in Jesus and who shall be raised at His coming to reign with Him over the nations. These—and doubtless they will form a great number—will be the resurrection when the thousand years are finished, and the dead, small and great, are judged. The evidence then seems to preponderate for the view, that while length of days will be the rule among the righteous, death will not be abolished while the animal, or the flesh and blood body, continues.

But to return to other phases of our subject,—the blessed effects of the Millennial reign.

Israel shall dwell in perfect safety even with respect to their outward, or personal condition. They shall have no dread of any wild beast. Whether in the wilderness or in the woods their persons shall be secure, both by day and by night. The peaceable reign of Christ shall so affect the lower creation, that the beasts that are ferocious by nature, shall lose their ferocity. “The wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den.”—Isa. xi. 6—8. “And I will make with them a covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods Neither shall the beast of the land devour them.”—Eze. xxxiv. 25, 28.

Nor will Israel have any dread of thieves and robbers, or of any violence from an enemy. They will dwell in their habitations in perfect peace, and will require neither locks, nor bolts, nor bars, as we do now. “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”—Isa. xxxii. 17, 18. “And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.”

—Eze. xxxiv. 28. “And I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.”—Hosea ii. 18. Thus neither the sword nor the beasts of the field, shall interfere with the safety of Israel.

In those days the human mind shall expand, and knowledge shall increase, and wisdom and prudence shall mark the actions of men. “And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.”—Isa. xxxiii. 6.

Impartial justice will be every where administered. Christ, the “King, shall reign in righteousness; and those whom He appoints as subordinate rulers “shall rule in judgment.” In addressing Israel the Lord says, “In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror for it shall not come near thee No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.”—Isa. liv. 14, 17. Men of learning, men of genius and talent, men of might and power, and men of brute force have tried to govern the nations, but none have governed them aright. Misrule, oppression, tyranny, despotism, extravagance, and cruelty have disgraced almost every government; and dissatisfaction, discontent, resistance, and sometimes rebellion have been the result. And where governments have been formed, in some measure, on christian principles, and therefore, have been on the whole more just and righteous, there has still been much that has been contrary to equity, and that has caused general uneasiness and unhappiness. This wrong will

never be righted, and equity and happiness will never take the place of their opposites till the government of the world is given into the hands of Christ.

The curse which came upon the earth when Adam fell shall be put away. What that curse implies, and therefore what shall be removed with the removal of the curse, will be understood by the following words:—"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field."—Gen. iii. 17, 18. In that day then this curse shall be lifted off the earth; the groans of creation shall be hushed, and even the soil shall become more fruitful and yield harvests of great abundance. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt."—Amos ix. 13. "And I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase."—Eze. xxxiv. 26, 27. The tree will bear more than its ordinary fruit, and the field will yield more than its usual increase. Hence a scarcity of food will never more be known. "And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen."—Eze. xxxvi. 30. "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it; thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water;

thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing."—Psa. lxv. 9—13.

Satan succeeds now, in various ways, in destroying human happiness, and when he does not altogether destroy it, he succeeds in many cases, in marring it; but in Millennial times his agency and power will be taken from him. The world will then see the wonderful difference between the reign of Satan and the reign of Christ. The Millennium will exhibit such a state of things as has never before been witnessed,—a state of things with which Satan will not be allowed to meddle.

Where tombstones have been erected, there will be beautiful blossoms of immortality. Where tattered garments and filthy rags have been common, there will be snow white robes of purity. Where tears have been seen, and mourning and sighing have been heard, rejoicings and triumphs and loud hallelujahs will prevail. Where clouds of moral darkness and blackness existed, there will be the bright sunshine of purity and love. Where Satan once manifested himself, Jesus will be revealed, and the glories of the Godhead will shine forth with dazzling splendour. The earth everywhere will present a wonderful change, and as the peaceful ages roll on, righteousness, and purity, and peace, and happiness shall progress.

What a loss it will be to the man who dies in his sins, to have dwelt on this earth while in its present state of sin and crime and groaning and wretchedness, and to be deprived of the glorious sight of beholding it when in a state of renewal and righteousness and blessedness. It will be a loss that no language can tell. Oh, that men would think on these things and lay them to heart.

The physical light of the world during the Millennial reign will be greatly increased. "Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."—Isa. xxx. 26. No satisfactory reason can be shown why this text should not be understood in its literal sense. The common system of spiritualizing so many portions of the Bible is derogatory to Holy Scripture.

But this light, great as it will be, will be exceeded, yea, superseded by Jehovah, who is Himself light, and therefore, a greater light than any created light. The glory, the brightness, and splendour which will encircle the Redeemer on the throne of His kingdom will be so wonderfully great that the light of the sun will be no longer needed. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."—Isa. lx. 19, 20.

It may be difficult to conceive of a light which transcends

the light of the noon-day sun, but Paul saw such a light when on his way to Damascus to persecute the saints ; and from the effect of that light he fell to the earth, and was without sight for three days. When relating the circumstances of his conversion, he says, "At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them that journeyed with me."—Acts xxvi. 13. It is clear from this that Jesus has already manifested Himself in light greater than the greatest light at present known to man : how transcendently great, therefore, will be the light which will surround Him when He sits upon His throne in the kingdom. And the eyes of His saints will be strengthened and adapted to that wonderful light.

Some think there are "reasons for the expectation of a new revelation." Just as when the old dispensation closed, a fuller revelation was given for the christian dispensation ; so when this dispensation closes, and the present prophecies become history, and the Millennial dispensation has commenced, we know not but some additions may be made to the present revelation, for the guidance of the saints in the Millennial kingdom. Many things that are mysterious to us will be quite clear to the saints of that age. They will have seen the fulfilment of the predictions relating to the second coming of Christ, as we now see the fulfilment of the predictions relating to His first coming. They will be in advance of what we are now, as we are now in advance of those who lived before Christ came. In the glorious future, spiritual vision will be enlarged, and greater light will doubtless be vouchsafed respecting God's providence and government.

The following stanzas, published in the *Prophetic Times*, will be very appropriate here :—

“ It will be order then,
Under the sceptre of a holy King,
Each creature, low and high, angels and men,
To the great concord sweetly ministering.
Self-will unknown, true harmony restored,
Happy obedience to the righteous Lord ;
The multitude of wills all lost in one—
The will that rules from the eternal throne.
Disorders, strifes, confusions, groans, and cries,
Then ended in the endless harmonies !
O age of order, how we long for thee,
In these chaotic days of dark perplexity !

It will be freedom then !
True freedom such as nations never saw,
Even at their freest in the days of old—
The freedom of submission to sure law ;
Freedom from self and sin, and lust and gold ;
Subjection to the truth, which maketh free ;
Surrender of the intellect and soul
To a divine and sweet captivity.
O age of freedom ! how we long for thee,
In these proud self-will’d days of spurious liberty.

It will be morning then !
Morn of the long, long looked-for golden day ;
Pure summer sunlight, dropping only health
And never-shaded joy, without one ray
Of poisonous bitterness to scorch or sear ;
But calling up creation’s boundless wealth
And beauty bright through all the eternal year,
The old sad night for ever passed away.
O morn of love, when, when wilt thou appear ? ”

No human tongue, however eloquent, can tell, no human heart, however imaginative, can conceive, the glories of

that morning, the blessedness of that day. What a beautiful earth will this be when the curse is no longer upon it, when fruitfulness appears every where, when the light of the holy city, new Jerusalem, shines down upon it, when all will dwell in their homes in peace and safety with no fear of evil men, when all will be governed by laws that are perfectly just and holy, when no injustice, or oppression, or wrong of any kind will be tolerated, when they are blessed with the Lord Jesus for their King, and with redeemed and glorified saints for their princes. There will not be one homeless wanderer then among the Jews in all the land of Palestine. Not one among them without food or clothing. Not one but what is holy and happy and joyous. And friendship will be sacred and sweet and perpetual. Oh, the glory, the blessedness, the joyousness of that period.

XXXVI.

THE RELATION OF THE MILLENNIAL REIGN TO THE GLORIFIED SAINTS.

THIS is a deeply interesting phase of our subject for thought and inquiry, but we frankly acknowledge it is beset with some difficulties, and there is no unanimity of opinion upon it among believers in the second advent. But there is one obstacle we believe frequently in the way of arriving at the truth,—the clinging tenaciously to one of two extreme views, when the truth lies between. And no matter how

extreme the view, some texts of holy writ may be quoted which, apart from their connection, and considered without regard to the main scope of Scripture teaching, seem to give it support. And on many subjects, if certain views are taken, it is impossible to reconcile some passages of Scripture with others on the same subject. For years we have perceived this, and for some time it was a source of difficulty and perplexity to us. It has been too common with many writers to adopt a certain theory, and to maintain it by a reference to certain passages, which indeed in their isolated position appeared fully to justify it. Then other passages which, in their isolated position, were against them, they would ignore or ingeniously explain away. This we have seen done times without number, and we believe that it is one of the most fruitful sources of error. This method sustains and perpetuates different and opposing classes of interpreters. Some take one view of a subject and claim a certain class of passages as proof texts; others take an opposite view of the same subject, and claim another class of passages as their proof texts. We could mention a number of subjects in respect to which this is done. And, to a superficial thinker, both parties seem to be right, as far as they quote Scripture. Now if Scripture is given by inspiration of God, one passage cannot be against another; one cannot teach an opposite doctrine to another. Both must be in harmony, and both must be capable of an interpretation which will show their harmony. These thoughts have been suggested by the difference of opinion which prevails on the subject of the above heading. Many believe and strenuously maintain that the glorified saints will dwell on the earth during the Millennial reign; and

they quote passages which plainly teach that Christ and His saints will reign on the earth ; that Christ will come to mount Zion, will sit upon David's throne, will be in the midst of His redeemed people, Israel, and that the glorified church will share in His reign and glory. But there are others who believe and maintain that during the Millennium the glorified saints will be with Christ in the new Jerusalem, the heavenly Jerusalem, in His Father's house, in heaven ; and there are not wanting passages which teach this. The question now is, Are these passages opposed to each other ? Do they teach contrary things ? Are they not capable of being reconciled ? Those who maintain the former view, fritter away the true meaning of the latter class of passages. Now we believe and maintain both views, with some modification. We believe that both views are true, *as Scripture presents them.*

In the first place we believe that the new Jerusalem will be the proper abode of the risen and translated saints. This we think will be made plain by a consideration of the following passages :—In John xiv. 2, 3, Christ says, “In my Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you : for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.” By His Father's house Christ could mean no other abode but heaven, the city of God. In Psa. xxxiii. 13, 14, heaven is called the place of His habitation. In Isa. lxiii. heaven is called the habitation of His holiness, and of His glory. And in this house, in this habitation, there is ample room for all believers, and by His death and resurrection and intercession Christ hath opened the door

for them ; and during His absence, during the period that He is at the Father's right hand, He is preparing them a place, a place in which to abide. But just as sure as He has gone, He will come again, and then where He is, we are to be also. Such is the plain teaching of these words ; this is the natural sense without any forcing of the words.

In John xvii. 24; the Saviour says, “ Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with me ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.” All believers are here regarded as forming one body, the church, which He purchased with His own precious blood. This blood-bought and blood-washed church is the Father's great gift to His beloved Son. And it is the Son's will and purpose that He has this gift with Him, where He is, that is, in heaven, where he is exalted and glorified at the Father's right hand. As Christ in His divine nature was omnipresent, this peculiar form of expression was not unfrequently on His lips. “ If any man serve me,” He said, “ let him follow me : and where *I am*, there shall also my servant be.”—John xii. 26. Remarking on the phrase, “ where I am,” Alford says, “ The word refers, not to the place of our Lord at that moment, but to His essential, true place, i.e., in the glory of the Father.”

In Phil. iii. 20, the apostle Paul says, “ For our citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” In the verses preceding, the apostle refers to some who were the enemies of Christ, and His cross, and who were earthly and sensual, and then contrasts his own state and the state of the Philippian christians with theirs. Our citizenship, he says, or commonwealth, is in

heaven, or the kingdom of heaven. And is not *our* common wealth in heaven, in the Jerusalem that is above? It is from heaven *we* are waiting for the Lord, who will call us to Himself to be where He is.

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, referring to the patriarchs, and making mention of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, speaks of their becoming sojourners by faith in the land of promise, dwelling in tents. But being heirs of the promise, they "looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God." This evidently refers to "the holy city, new Jerusalem." "No other interpretation," says Alford, "will suit the language here used. The "*city of the living God*" of chap. xii. 32, and the "*city which is to come*" of chap. xiii. 14, must be here meant also. Of the earthly Jerusalem indeed it is said, Ps. lxxxvii. 1, "*its foundation is in the holy mountains*": but it is impossible, that the earthly Jerusalem can be meant here. The lives of the dwellers in her rather corresponded to the precarious dwelling in tents than to the abiding in a permanent city: and the true reference of the expression "having the foundations" is to be found in Rev. xxi. 14, 19. As having these foundations, it forms a contrast to the tent, placed on the ground and easily transported." The apostle, after speaking of their dying in faith, ere the promises had been fulfilled to them, and of their looking forward to their actual accomplishment in the distant future, and hoping for and welcoming the far-off promised home, says, "For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own. And if indeed they had been mindful of that country from which they went out, they would have had

opportunity to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city."—Heb. xi. 14—16. No fair interpretation of these passages can show that they were looking for any home but one above, a heavenly home, a city prepared by God.

In chap. xii. 22—24, the apostle, after enumerating the fruits of faith in the fathers of Old Testament times, and grounding an exhortation to faithfulness on the fact of their being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, says to the christians to whom the epistle is addressed, "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel." Now observe several of the phrases in this passage. "The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." We have the heavenly Jerusalem, which must be distinct from the earthly Jerusalem, heaven as distinct from and above the earth. "Innumerable hosts of angels." The myriads of spirits that surround the Almighty, whose home is not earth but heaven. "The spirits of just men made perfect." Who can these be but the old Testament saints of whom the apostle had been speaking in the previous chapter? It does not say that as men they are made perfect, because they cannot be made perfect as men till the resurrection. And here we may

remark that this cannot refer to them as they will be in the resurrection state, but as they were at the time of the writing of these words. It says their spirits are made perfect, which would not be said of them if they were not alive. If they are utterly unconscious, if there is a suspension of life, there is no proper sense of the word in which their spirits are made perfect. If they are not alive, would they be associated in this passage with the living God, and with living angels? Now whatever sense may be attached to the phrase, "But ye are come," it does not change the condition of those to whom they were favoured to draw near. They had drawn near by faith, or by promise, or by preparation, or by these several things together, to the heavenly Jerusalem, which is identical with the city of God, to God, to angels, to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator. Now as the heavenly Jerusalem is here recognized as the habitation or home of God, and Christ, and angels, and the perfected spirits of holy men, it is fair to conclude that it will be the home of glorified saints after the resurrection of their bodies.

Another passage where the heavenly Jerusalem is mentioned is Gal. iii. 25, 26 : "Now this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is: for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free." Jerusalem here being said to be *above* is only another way of calling it the *heavenly* Jerusalem.

In the third chapter of the Revelation where Christ assures His church that because they keep His word, He also will keep them "from the hour of trial, that hour

which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." He says, "I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown. He that overcometh, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out thence no more: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and mine own new name."—Verses 11, 12. The language of this passage unmistakably carries us into the future. To those who retain what they have attained, and conquer their spiritual foes, there is a reward when Jesus comes. He will make them pillars in God's sanctuary; shall give them an abiding position in the church of the glorified; and He will write upon them God's name, and His own new name, and the name of God's city, the new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God. It is clear from this passage that at the Lord's coming, which is prior to the thousand years, His faithful people will have a home in God's temple, in the new Jerusalem.

Let us now view the new Jerusalem as John speaks of it in the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation. He had two visions of this holy city. When he had one of those visions he was carried away in the Spirit into a wilderness, and one of the seven angels that had the seven bowls, showed him a number of wonderful things. And we wish to emphasize the circumstance that what he saw he saw on the earth. The place he looked from was a wilderness. These things are narrated in the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th chapters. In the latter end of chapter xx. at the close of the thousand years, he sees the passing away of the earth and the heaven

from the presence of Him that sits on the great white throne. Then after this, still in company with the same angel, and without any intimation of a change of position, he sees, chapter xxi., a new heaven and a new earth. The next thing he sees is the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. Then it is that he sees God about to dwell with them. One of these seven angels shows him all that is related in these four chapters, and in the early part of the next.

At verses 9, 10, of chap. xxi. the apostle partly in the same language as that which he uses in chap. xvii. 1, 3, tells us of what he is further shown by one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls. The angel might have been the same as the one in chapter xvii.; it is certain he was one of those seven. But now the apostle is no longer in a wilderness. The angel carried him away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, that he might show him the bride, the wife of the Lamb. He was then shewed the holy city Jerusalem, the dwelling place of the bride; and he saw it "coming down out of heaven from God." He appears now to be in close proximity to it, and sees it in all parts; its foundations, its length, and breadth, and height, its gates, and its various kinds of precious stones. We are not to suppose that the holy city came down to the mountain, or rested on the mountain, but that it came near to it, for John was lifted up to this great height to have a view of it. If it had rested on the earth in the midst of dwellings made by hands, there would have been no need to have been thus taken up to a mountain in order to see it.

Now it is not till John sees the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven in connection with his view of the new

earth, that he hears "a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them." Our conclusion from this is, that prior to the new earth, it will not come down to be with men; will not rest on the earth until the earth has undergone that wonderful renewal. It may be within sight of men on the earth, but not among them. No other conclusion seems equal or fair, or in harmony with all the circumstances. But if the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven from God, and yet does not come to the earth till there is a new earth, where is it prior to that period? Where is it during the thousand years? We believe it is over the earth, and within view of the Millennial saints. If resurrected and translated believers will be equal to the angels in their power to pass from place to place, from heaven to earth or from earth to heaven, it is not necessary to abide on the earth to rule or exercise authority over those who are living upon it. Some persons, however, insist very strongly that their abode will be on the earth. They believe that just as Christ after His resurrection "remained forty days upon earth, the glorified among the unglorified; so shall the church triumphant, consisting of the resurrected saints," remain upon the earth; saints in glorified bodies among saints in flesh and blood, or animal bodies. Now this point the same as every other point, we have honestly endeavoured to settle, not according to any pre-conceived notions, or as we would like to have it, but according to the word. And the word we think has given us some light on this point. At the close of the Millennium, when the first heaven and the first earth are passed away, and the sea is no more, and there is a new earth, the new Jerusalem comes

down out of heaven from God ; and the fair inference from this is, that until then, though it descends from heaven, it rests before it reaches the earth and remains within sight of men. This seems to be the position of the holy city during the Millennial reign ; this seems to be the position in which John saw it from the mountain height. This position also harmonizes with the statement, Rev. xxi. 24, that the nations walk by the light of it. Unless above the earth, and yet so near to the earth as to shed down its light upon it, we do not see how the nations, some of them separated from each other by hundreds or thousands of miles, could walk amidst the light thereof. In the way of accepting this view, however, some may imagine there is this difficulty. It is when John sees the holy city from this lofty situation,—it is when it seems to be beyond the reach of men, that the kings of the earth are said to bring their glory into it. Now while we may not be able fully to remove this difficulty, it should not be allowed to overthrow a truth so clearly taught. There are, however, two or three things we may say, which if they do not remove the difficulty, will very much lessen it. We are definitely taught that Christ will be the only king, and the whole world will be His kingdom, and the glorified church will reign with Him. There will, therefore, be no earthly kings in the sense in which we now use that word. Dean Alford concludes that there will be "nations organized under kings" even on the new earth. This we think is a great mistake. We do not think there will be such nations even in the Millennial reign, much less in the eternal state. In the Millennial reign there will be nations, but they will be nations organized under Christ ; and His saints, who are

joint heirs with Him, will be kings, princes, and judges over those nations. The term, kings of the earth, in this passage may mean no more than men who were previously kings. Many instances might be furnished in which men continue to be called by certain names indicative of certain offices long after they have ceased to fill those offices. Or the term may refer to the saints who will then be constituted kings.

Now the conclusion we come to from the whole is this,—and it seems to us that no honest mode of reasoning can bring us to any other conclusion,—that as there is no mention of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God till after the Millennium, when a new earth is created, we have no Scripture warrant for believing that it comes down to the earth at the beginning of the Millennium; and hence if it is the home of the glorified, there is no Scripture ground for the opinion that the risen and translated saints will dwell on the earth previous to its renewal by fire.

But in the Millennial age there will doubtless be occasional—perhaps frequent—intercourse between the saints of the Lord on the earth and the saints of the Lord in the heavenly city. While there is nothing very definite and positive on this point in Scripture—no express declaration we mean—yet we reach this conclusion from the statement that the saints—the glorified saints—shall judge the world. Passages proving this we have already produced. Then the apostles are to be judges of ransomed Israel. To the twelve apostles, Christ says, “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also

shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Then again, in Matt. xxvi. 29, after giving His disciples bread and wine which were afterwards to be taken in commemoration of His death, He says, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." In Luke xxii. 28—30 also, Jesus says, "But ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Now if the twelve apostles in their glorified state, will judge the twelve tribes of Israel, it is natural to suppose there will be some method of intercourse.

And the new Jerusalem, the home of the risen saints, and the home of those who are changed and caught up to meet the Lord, will doubtless be visible during the Millennium: and those who dwell in the earthly mount Zion may receive visits from those in the holy city above them. If this is not to be so, we know not how to understand the words of Jesus to Nathaniel, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."—John i. 51. And the resurrected saints, it must be remembered, will then be as the angels of God. Thus the earthly Zion will be honoured and distinguished by the beauty and glory of heaven being made visible to it. Since the above was written, N. Starkey in a work he has lately published advances the same idea. In explanation of the phrase, the "new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of

heaven," he remarks, "By which we understand that a region of glory constituting the home, rest, and rendezvous of the raised and changed saints shall hover over the restored Jerusalem, near enough to be within sight, but not near enough to interfere with the alternations of night and day. That this shall be the heaven opened, first shown in vision to our father Jacob on the plain of Padan-aram and then promised by our blessed Lord to Nathaniel, which being then fulfilled we shall better understand his saying, John i. 51."

Speaking of some of the events which will precede this state, Mr. Newton says, "After these things, the heavenly City, which is one especial sphere of the saints' glory, descends from God out of Heaven. But although descending *from*, and therefore *contrasted with*, Heaven, yet it does not descend *into* the Millennial Earth. The Adamic Earth is not adapted to its glory. It remains therefore throughout the Millennium, *connected* indeed *with* the Earth, but not *in* the Earth—and it is not, until the first Heavens and Earth have passed away, and New Heavens and a New Earth created, that it descends again, and finds a New Creation suited to its glory.

"Its relation to the Heaven and to the Earth, during the Millennium, is analogous to that which the Holy Place occupied in the temple. It was situate intermediately between the Holy of Holies, and the external court where Israel worshipped. The Holy Place was the place of Priestly service—the place of intercession—the place where the golden Candlestick was set, the type of the Church in Heavenly union with Christ. All this, and more, the Heavenly City will be. Thence the regulations of God's

government, as well as the instructions of His grace, will reach Israel and the earth."

Thus we think we have made this matter clear. And in view of the evidence we have given we must express our regret that we so often hear brethren—believers in the second advent—speak of this earth as their future heaven during the Millennium. We think this is not only a great mistake, but one calculated to injure the cause we have at heart, for many prior to their beginning the study of this subject would be thereby repulsed. We who are part of Christ's body, the church, are not, in the future, to be in the capacity of servants, but in the capacity of kings, princes, rulers; we are to be crowned and are to reign with Christ over the nations. Shall we in our glorified condition,—shall we, in our resurrection, spiritual bodies dwell on the earth with men in an earthly condition? Such a thought is not consonant with Holy Scripture. We here say nothing as to whether it will be our home in the ages beyond the Millennium, but certainly it will not be our home during the thousand years' reign; it cannot be the home of the resurrected and glorified till it is renewed by fire, and become indeed a new earth.

XXXVII.

THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH.

WHEN duration has ceased to be measured by months and years, when life in its present state has ceased to be, and

the ordinary sustenance for life, as it now is, has ceased to be necessary, when the thousand years' reign on earth shall have passed away, there will shortly follow the eternal state; heaven and earth will be dissolved, and new heavens and a new earth will take the place of the old. And the sea, no longer needed by nature as it exists at present, will be dried up.

But at the close of the Millennial reign, and ere the eternal commences, Satan will be loosed a little season. In this prophetic announcement there is something to stagger human reason; there is something we cannot understand; we see not why Satan should be again permitted to tempt men, and spread sin and rebellion and misery over the earth after so glorious a reign of righteousness, even though it be only for a short time. Some of God's ways are inscrutable. We cannot by searching find them out; they must be left for the great future to explain. And in the present age we must cherish faith in the wisdom and righteousness of those parts of the divine government which we cannot comprehend. Gilfillan believes that a few will be under the influence of the evil one during the Millennium, and will be ripened by him for the final rebellion. But this cannot be. Will not the evil one be in prison? Men will still be under the influence of their propensities and passions, and by these may be led to disobedience. It is after the thousand years that Satan is to be loosed for a little season, and it is doubtless during that little season that he will ripen some for the final rebellion.

Terrible judgments mark the end of all God's dispensations, and it will be so at the end of the Millennial

dispensation. Man ends each dispensation by turning his back upon God : God ends each one by turning against man in anger and severity. At the end of each dispensation God brings in a brighter, but man thus far still abuses his probation and his privileges.

The Scriptures distinctly predict that the present heavens and the present earth shall pass away, or be destroyed, or be changed. "Heaven and earth," says Christ, "shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."—Matt. xxiv. 35. The prophet Isaiah says, "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment."—Isa. li. 6. David declares the same thing in terms too plain to be misunderstood. "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed."—Ps. cii. 25, 26. And Peter, also, in his second epistle, says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."—Chap. iii. 10. The earth then upon which we now live, after being subject to the process of burning by fire will be renewed or remoulded and prepared and beautified as the locality of the everlasting kingdom. This burning of the earth of which the apostle thus speaks, evidently sets forth not its destruction, but its regeneration. Other passages bearing on this point require his words to be

interpreted with some modification. It will undergo a thorough renewal, the last trace of the curse being fully and for ever removed. In his "Commentary," Dr. Adam Clarke says, "The present earth, though destined to be burned up, will not be destroyed but be renewed, and refined, purged from all moral and natural imperfections, and made the endless abode of blessed spirits." "It is more reasonable and philosophical to conclude that the earth shall be *refined and restored*, than finally destroyed." Professor Hodge, in his "Systematic Theology," says, "Many of the old theologians thought that the whole existing physical universe was to be destroyed. This view is now universally discarded."

When a sinner is renewed by divine grace, he is said by the apostle Paul to be a *new creature*. That does not mean the destruction of the sinner's person, and the substitution of another, but such a change of heart, of choice, and desire, and purpose, and object, as to constitute him, morally, a *new creature*. In like manner, by the new earth, is not meant the literal burning up, or destruction, of the present earth, but a change, a purification so complete as to render it a *new earth*.

Paradise was beautiful enough in which to live before sin entered it. It was the home God made for sinless Adam and Eve. If the Almighty thought it suitable for them before they sinned, should we think the new earth, which may be as beautiful as the garden of Eden,—perhaps even far more beautiful,—unworthy as a dwelling place for redeemed souls in the future?

Christ says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." It is doubtless to this happy, this ever-

lasting future, or to the Millennial period, that these words of Christ apply. Some who are opposed to the doctrine that the earth, in its renovated state, will be the future abode of the righteous, tell us that they inherit it now. But there is no proper sense of the word in which this is true. The earth at present, for by far the most part, is possessed by the wicked, the enemies of the righteous and the enemies of God. These form the ascendant, prevailing, ruling party. This promise cannot be fulfilled till the Millennial age, and it *may* have reference to the eternal future.

Dean Alford, commenting on Matt. v. 12, says, "The general tenour of prophecy, and the analogy of the divine dealings point unmistakably to *this earth, purified and renewed*, as the eternal habitation of the blessed."

John the divine, in his prophecies, makes the wonderful announcement: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His peoples, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."—Rev. xxi. 1—3.

What a grand, what a glorious, what a beautiful spectacle will the new earth present, where there will be no trace of sin, or of the dreadful work sin has done. "We believe," says W. de Burgh, "and we are well assured, that the time will come when we may traverse the whole of God's creation from the one end to the other, and not

find a trace of sin or evil—not see the curse in any form—not hear a sigh or groan—not meet with an enemy of God; but when every heart that beats shall respond to His will, and every voice that sounds shall swell the chorus of His praise."

But there is considerable misapprehension as to the time when the present earth shall pass away, and the new earth shall take its place. Some think that these great events will occur when Christ comes, when the Anti-christ and his wicked helpers are destroyed, and Satan is imprisoned, and the Millennial kingdom is established. We, however, think that these events will not take place till the end of the Millennial reign. This misapprehension has arisen from a misunderstanding of one clause in the passage we have quoted from Peter: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up." It is by not perceiving the full import of the term, "the day of the Lord," that so many preachers and writers have made this mistake. We think that the whole thousand years is included in the day of the Lord, or the day of judgment, and that the new earth will not take the place of the old till the close of that day; *in the day*, as the apostle says, but not *in the beginning*, but in the *end*, of the day. And this view is sanctioned by the two verses preceding. "But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness." Verses 8, 9. Now the gospel dispensa-

tion is called by the apostle Paul "the day of salvation;" yet that day has lasted nearly 2,000 years. So the day of God, or the day of judgment, we believe, will not be an ordinary day of twenty-four hours, but a long period. Remarking on Luke xxii. 29, 30, in which Christ tells His twelve apostles that He appoints them a kingdom, that they may sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Milton says, "The judgment here spoken of will not be confined to a single day, but will extend through a great space of time; the word being used to denote not so much a judicial inquiry, properly so called, as an exercise of dominion; in which sense Gideon, Jephthah, and others judged Israel."

During the Millennial kingdom men will live upon the earth, and there will be different nations, and men will cultivate the land, and sow, and reap, and carry on trade and commerce. The thought then that the new earth will be created at the commencement of that kingdom is incongruous with all this.

During the thousand years' reign, though all Israel shall be righteous, some will come under the designation of sinners. But in the new heavens and the new earth, there will be no sin. The new heavens and the new earth, therefore, will be after the Millennium.

During the Millennial reign there will be isles, and therefore, sea, and ships, as we see from Isa. lx; but in the new earth there will be no more sea: so John the revelater teaches.

It is when Christ sits on the great white throne, that the earth and the heaven pass away, and there will be found no place for them, and it is then that a new heaven

and a new earth appear ; but it is not till the thousand years' reign is finished, and the wicked dead are raised, and Satan is loosed out of prison, that Christ will be seated on the great white throne ; therefore, there cannot be a new heaven and a new earth at the commencement of the day of the Lord.

But further ; if the old earth passes away, and the new earth takes its place, at the beginning of the thousand years, and the wicked dead are not raised till the end of the thousand years, whence are they to come ? They were buried in the old earth, but that will have passed away, will have been burned up. The idea that untold millions of corrupt and wicked dead will be raised up out of the new earth, is utterly absurd. Therefore, the wicked dead must be raised before the existence of the new earth ; but the wicked dead will not be raised till the thousand years are finished, which is conclusive against a new earth at the beginning of the thousand years, or what is called "the day of the Lord."

The prophet Isaiah, it is true, in connection with his descriptions of Millennial blessedness, speaks of the creation of new heavens and a new earth ; but the above definite teachings of the word compel us to modify this statement of the prophet. Isaiah is speaking of the earthly, but wonderfully improved, state of things during the reign of righteousness, as the context abundantly proves ; and his words must be taken, not as the fulfilment, but as the promise, pledge, or earnest of the new heavens and new earth. In the beginning of the Millennial reign, when the man of sin is destroyed, and Satan has lost his power to tempt, and the curse is removed from the land, and truth

and purity and happiness prevail, the earth will have undergone such a change as to be new in a certain sense of the word; but the burning up of the earth and the works which are in it, and the creation of the new earth, will not be accomplished till the Millennial state, which will still be an earthly one, is finished. Understood thus there is harmony between these things; but understood in the opposite way there is confusion. Some time after we had formed these views, we were glad to see them confirmed by William Kelly in his work on the Apocalypse. "I deny," he says, "that the day of the Lord, as St. Peter uses it, is the mere epoch of the Lord's coming, but rather the entire period covered by His reign and judgment. Hence the Millennium, as well as the final dissolution of the actual heaven and earth, may and do occur within the compass of His day, while His coming may precede them both. . . . It is plain that the Holy Spirit in St. Peter refers to the passage of Isaiah, as it is said, "We *according to His* promise." But still he gives it a larger and deeper meaning. St. John shows that while the Millennium may be a partial fulfilment of it, the full force of the expression will not come out till the Millennium is over; and then, when all is according to divine thought and purpose, God will rest and *men*, not Israel only, but redeemed and glorified men—shall be His people, and He their God." Then Isaiah's words will be true in the fullest sense; they will be accomplished to the letter; the heaven and the earth will be new in a deeper sense than at any period of the Millennial kingdom.

Mankind are not sent into the world for the present age; their proper destiny is not to be found in this dis-

pensation ; it is only in the ages beyond that the end of their being will be accomplished. Hence no man whose mind is enlightened, and who tries to understand his nature and destiny, is satisfied with the things of the present age. He looks into the future for that which will fully satisfy the cravings of his nature. He hopes for something greater, something better, something grander, something more beautiful, something more elevating, something more satisfying than anything he finds here. These hopes, these aspirations, will only be realised when Jesus comes again, and when all things are made new, and when light and purity and love and joy prevail in every part of the vast universe, and God is all and in all.

XXXVIII.

THE BELIEF OF THE FATHERS AND OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS CONCERNING THE MILLENNIUM.

SOME may call the view of the Millennium which we have advocated a *new* view ; we say it is an *old* view, as old as the church, as old as the Scriptures ; and if it is new to *you*, it is to your shame, for it is to be found in the Revelation of St. John, and other parts of the Bible, and you ought to be acquainted with it. And this view, the doctrine according to the literal meaning of the apostle's teaching, has come down to us as the faith of the church during the first three hundred years.

Irenæus and Polycarp both taught the personal coming

of Christ. Now Irenæus received instruction from Polycarp, and Polycarp received instruction from the apostle John.

As an author, Irenæus, who was bishop of Lyons, was well and favourably known about the year 78. Referring to the fact that Abraham received no inheritance in the holy land, Irenæus says, "As God promised to him the inheritance of the earth, and he received it not during the whole time he lived in it, it is necessary that he should receive it, together with his seed, that is, with such of them as fear God, and believe in Him, in the resurrection of the just."

About the year 95, Clement wrote two epistles; and we are assured by Dr. Duffield that "there is not in Clement's writings the most remote hint of a Millennium of religious prosperity before the coming of Christ."

Papias, who flourished about the year 116, and who was bishop of Hierapolis, taught "that there will be a certain thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ will be established visibly on this earth."

Justin Martyr, who wrote between the year 140 and the year 160, looked for a thousand years' reign in this world—"in the city of Jerusalem, built, adorned, and enlarged according to the prophets." This shows the sense in which he understood the prophecies. His knowledge of the prophetic writings was very great, as indeed was his other learning also. He gives his own views and those of the christians of his times very clearly in an answer he gave to a certain Jew who put to him this question: "Do you confess that this place, Jerusalem,

shall be rebuilt, and your people be congregated, and rejoice together with Christ and the patriarchs, and prophets?" "I confessed to you before," replied Justin, "that I, and many others, besides, do believe, as you well know, this shall be. But, on the other hand, I have also signified to you that many, who are not of the pure and pious faith of the Christians do not acknowledge this; they are called Christians, indeed, but are godless, impious heretics, because they teach doctrines that, in every respect, are blasphemous, atheistic, foolish, etc. They do not confess this, but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and say there is no resurrection of the dead, but that at death, their souls are received up into the heaven. Do not imagine that these are Christians. But, I, and others, who are rightminded Christians on all points, know there will be *a resurrection of the dead, and a 1,000, years in Jerusalem*, built, adorned, broadened, as the prophets Ezekiel, Isaiah, and others declare." Again, he says, 'A certain man among us, of the name of John, *one of the Apostles of Christ*, in a Revelation which he had, prophesied that they who were faithful to our Christ, would accomplish 1,000 years in Jerusalem, *and, after that, the general and, to speak concisely, the final (eternal) resurrection and judgment of all would take place*. Just as our Lord also said, They shall neither marry nor be given in marriage, but shall be equal to the angels, the children of the God of the resurrection."

Dr. Burnet, speaking of Clement, bishop of Alexandria, who flourished near the end of the second century, says, "He has not said anything that I know of, either for or against the Millennium: but he takes notice 'that the

seventh day has been accounted sacred both by the Hebrews and Greeks, because of the revolution of the world, and the renovation of all things' It can be in no other sense than that the seventh day represents the seventh Millennium, in which the kingdom and renovation are to be."

Cyprian, who flourished during the first half of the third century, according to Dr. Burnet, "fixed the period of 6,000 years, and made the seventh Millennium the consummation of all."

Methodius, the first bishop of Olympus, is said by Whitby, who is opposed to his views, to have "held to a *pure* Millennium—free from everything sensual."

Tertullian believed that Christ's coming would be prior to the Millennium, and it was a custom among the believers in his day "to pray that they might have part in the first resurrection."

Lactantius wrote early in the fourth century, and defended Millenarianism. Dr. Lardner says, "It is well known that Lactantius expected a terrestrial reign of Christ for a thousand years before the general judgment." Lactantius calls the Millennial period "the thousand years of the heavenly empire, when righteousness shall reign on earth."

Nepos, an Egyptian bishop, a man of learning, wrote a work in favour of the literal understanding of the Millennium, and against the fanciful interpretations of those who had departed from the evident meaning of the word. Referring to the Millennium, Mosheim remarks, "Nepos attempted to revive its authority in a work written against the allegorists, as he contemptuously styled the opposers

of the Millennium." In his "Lives of the Fathers," Dr. Cave who was opposed to the Millennial view, and therefore speaks of it as error, thus testifies to the belief of Nepos: "He was a man," says he, "skilled in the Holy Scriptures, and also a poet, and that he had fallen into the *error* of the *Millennarians*, and had published books to show that the promises made in the *Scriptures* to good men were according to the sense and opinions of the *Jews* to be literally understood." Whitby also acknowledges that Nepos taught that "the kingdom of Christ was to be upon earth a thousand years, and the saints were to reign with Him" after the first resurrection.

The church, in its primitive state, accepted the doctrine of the Millennium; but after the errors and idolatries and abominations of the Papacy had sprung up, and corrupted the church, the church rejected it. Should we not, therefore, rather follow the primitive church than the apostate church? Shall we not be in better company with the early christians than with the christians of the dark ages, when truth had almost fallen and the light of the gospel was almost obscured? Some of the books of the Fathers which defended the doctrine of the Millennium, were suppressed by Rome.

The writings of the Fathers are not authoritative; they are not our standard; the sacred *Scriptures* only we regard as our authority, as our standard of true doctrine. The writings of the Fathers doubtless contain, more or less fully, all the doctrines taught in *Holy Scripture*; but those doctrines, to a greater or less degree, are perverted. In some instances part of the truth is withheld: in other instances, the truth is mixed up with human additions. The doctrine

of the Millennium was encumbered with some merely human notions ; but that does not invalidate the fact that the doctrine had come down to them from the early disciples and apostles.

XXXIX.

TESTIMONY OF MEN LEARNED IN ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY TO THE BELIEF OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH IN THE MILLENNIUM.

SPEAKING of the pre-millennial faith being the faith of the early christians, Chillingworth says, "That this doctrine is by the present Romish Church held false and heretical, I think no man will deny. That the same doctrine is by the church of the next age after the apostles held true and catholic, I prove by these two reasons: First, whatever doctrine is believed and taught by the most eminent Fathers of any age of the church, and by none of their contemporaries opposed or condemned, that is to be esteemed the catholic doctrine of the church of those times ; but the doctrine of the Millennaries was believed and taught by the most eminent Fathers of the age next after the Apostles, and by none of that age opposed or condemned ; therefore it was the catholic doctrine of those times . . . And second, whatever doctrine is taught by the Fathers of any age, not as doctors, but as witnesses of the tradition of the church, that is, not as their own opinion, but as the doctrine of the church of their time,



neither did any contradict them in it : *ergo*, it is undoubtedly to be so esteemed."

Edward Gibbon, the historian, who it is well known was a confirmed unbeliever, and who does injustice to the religion of Christ, nevertheless bears testimony to the faith of the primitive christians. He says, "The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the second coming of Christ . . . The assurance of such a Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of Fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenæus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine. Though it might not be universally received, it appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox believers ; and it seemed so well adapted to the desires and apprehensions of mankind, that it must have contributed in a very considerable degree to the progress of the Christian faith."

David N. Lord says, "Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Lactantius, expressly found their doctrines of the Millennium on the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, and the prophecies of Isaiah 65th, Zech. 14th, and other passages of the Old Testament, that are alleged by Millennarians as foreshadowing the reign of Christ and the saints on the earth. Not a hint is uttered by them that they were led to their belief in that reign by Jewish interpretations, or traditions ; or that they drew their notions of it in any manner from the opinions that were entertained by the Jews of the reign of the Messiah."

In an article, headed, Millennium, in the American Encyclopædia, it is said that "the expectation of a blessed

Millennium, became a universal belief among the christians of the first centuries, which was strengthened by the prophecies contained in Revelations of the times which were to precede and indicate the happy times of the Millennium This faith the christian teachers of the first centuries were unanimous in adopting and promulgating When Christianity became the predominant religion of the Roman Empire, it lost its interest for the multitude; victory, liberty, and security, which the Millennium was expected to bring, being now actually enjoyed."

Another testimony to the faith of the early church on the Millennium, is found in the writings of bishop Russell, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, of the Episcopal Church of Scotland "The Jews and their followers in the primitive times," he says, "understood the Millennium literally: the word had no double sense in their creed; it was not in their estimation the emblem or shadow of better things to come; on the contrary, it denoted the actual visible appearance of the Messiah, and the establishment of his kingdom upon earth as the Sovereign of the elect people of God." "So far as we view the question in reference to the sure and certain hope entertained by the Christian world, that the Redeemer would appear on earth, and exercise authority during a thousand years, there is good ground for the assertion of Mede, Dodwell, Burnet, and other writers on the same side, that down to the beginning of the fourth century, the belief was universal and undisputed." This admission, it must be remembered, is made by one strongly opposed to the doctrine, and who calls it a "Rabbinical fable which had no connection with the Gospel."

Munscher, a German writer, and unfriendly to the doctrine of the Millennium, is yet constrained to make this admission: "How widely the doctrine of Millennialism prevailed in the first centuries of Christianity, appears from this, that it was universally received by almost all teachers."

Dr. Whitby, though he wrote against the personal reign, also made an admission which is very important, "The doctrine of the Millennium," he says "or the reign of saints on earth a thousand years, is now rejected by all Roman Catholics, and by the greatest part of Protestants, and yet it passed among the best of Christians for two hundred and fifty years for a tradition apostolical; and as such is delivered by many Fathers of the second and third century, who spake of it as the tradition of our Lord and His apostles, and of all the ancients that lived before them; who tell us the very words in which it was delivered, the Scriptures, which were then so interpreted, and say that it was held by all christians who were exactly orthodox." If this doctrine was thus received by the early christians, which they grounded upon many passages, both in the prophets and in the christian scriptures, it is strange that Whitby and so many others should give them an opposite interpretation.

Dr. Elliot, who made the writings of the early Fathers a special study, referring to Christ's personal coming, declares that "no other coming ever entered the minds of the early Christians."

"The Millennial kingdom of Christ," says Dr. Burnet, "was the general doctrine of the primitive church from the times of the Apostles to the Council of Nice, *inclusively*.

According to the opinion of these Fathers, there will be a kingdom of Christ upon earth, and moreover in the new heavens and new earth."

Referring to the belief of the first and second centuries, Maitland observes, "As far as I know, no one, except such as were notoriously out of the pale of the church, had impugned the doctrine of the Millennium, as held by Justin, or taught any doctrine contrary to it."

Mede affirms that "this was the opinion of the whole orthodox Christian church in the age immediately following St. John." He also says that "none were known to deny it but the heretics, who denied the resurrection."

Gieseler, a historian, remarkable for candour and honesty, says, "Chiliasm is so distinctly and prominently mentioned that we cannot hesitate in regarding it as the general belief of that age."

Homes says, "The stream of all the best approved antiquity before Jerome—Hebews, Greeks, Latines—ran that way."

"The Millennial doctrine," observes Dr. Kitto, "may be regarded as generally prevalent in the second century."

"The doctrine of the Millennium," remarks bishop Newton, "was generally believed in the three first and purest ages."

It is the testimony of Jeremy Taylor, that "the doctrine of the Millennium was in the best ages esteemed no heresy, but true catholic doctrine."

It is stated by professor Stuart that Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, &c., regarded the descriptions of the thousand years' reign on earth, of the first resurrection of the dead, and of the New Jerusalem, as designed to be

literally interpreted in order to elicit the true meaning of the *Apocalypse*."

The learned Dr. Burton, who was some time Regius Professor of Theology at Christ's Church, Oxford, says, in his *Bampton Lecture* for 1829, "Papias, who heard the apostle John, and was a companion of Polycarp, held that there would be a period of a thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ would be established on the earth." "It cannot be denied that Papias, Irenæus, Justin *Martyr*, and all the other ecclesiastical writers, believed, literally, that the saints would rise in the first resurrection, and reign with Christ upon earth previous to the general resurrection." But after the middle of the third century, Dr. Burton concludes that the doctrine was not received as that of the catholic church, though it continued to be held by some.

Abbott and Conant, in their "Dictionary of Religious Knowledge," say, "These views may be traced to the earliest history of the church, and were advocated by the fathers up to the fourth century. They then declined, till the Reformation gave them a new impulse, since which time they have prevailed through the entire church to a large extent.

Speaking of the personal and visible return of our Lord, Dr. S. H. Tyng, Jur., of New York, says, "There will be no dispute that the earliest writings of the Christian Fathers recognised it as the current opinion of the post-Apostolic Church. The ancient creeds have crystallized it in confession. The oldest liturgies express it in devotion."

Mosheim, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, writing under the

“Third Century,” observes, “Long before this period, an opinion had prevailed that Christ was to come and reign a thousand years among men, before the entire and final dissolution of this world. This opinion, which had hitherto met with no opposition, was variously interpreted by different persons, &c. But in this century its credit began to decline, principally through the influence and authority of Origen, who opposed it with the greatest warmth, because it was incompatible with some of his favourite sentiments.” In this century some had begun to put a figurative interpretation on the Millennium. Origen was one of the chief of those who began to spiritualize what was literal. But the doctrine was believed by the majority of christians for nearly a hundred years after Origen began to oppose it. Though he got many converts to his errors, it was a long time before that precious truth became hidden, or almost hidden, from the church. In the latter part of the fourth century, Epiphanius, who was bishop of Salamasis, held the doctrine of the Millennium, and affirmed that many of his time also held it. Referring to the statement of Vitalius, “that in the first resurrection we shall accomplish a certain Millenary of years,” Epiphanius says, “And that indeed this Millenary term is written of in the Apocalypse of John, and is received of very many of them that are godly, is manifest.”

Now this Origen, it should be understood, greatly departed from the truth and did a vast amount of harm. He teaches that the Scriptures “are constituted with a triple meaning,” that “a threefold explication should be given of the meaning of the sacred word.” It is said of him, “He circulated two books on magic attributed to

Jannes and Jambres, representing those two prime magicians of the court of Pharaoh as inspired prophets. He taught that magic was a true and lawful science. From his master Ammonius, he learned the art of communicating with demons." Hagenbach says, "He went so far that contrary to general opinion, he did not even take from Satan all hope of future pardon." Lord says that he "introduced into his theology a great number of false, absurd, and impious conjectures and dogmas, which obscured, adulterated, or set aside the truth, and formed emphatically another Gospel."

This is the man who did more than any other man to overthrow the doctrine of the Millennium, to throw discredit on the teachings of the apostles, and to turn the tide of religious opinion in the church. He succeeded, alas, to a lamentable extent. Other writers adopted his method of spiritualizing what was evidently meant to be taken in a literal sense. The Revelation of John stood in the way of the spread of their new views. He taught the Millennium so plainly that they saw little hope for the prevalence of their allegorizing notions except by throwing discredit on that book. This is a point of such importance, and the truth respecting it is so little known, that it is necessary to establish our statement by some quotations.

Dionysius, who was bishop of Alexandria, and who lived in the third century, opposed the doctrine of the Millennium. And to make good his opposition, he endeavoured to throw discredit on the Apocalypse. "It was in the act of writing against Millenniumarians," says Dr. Elliot, "that he pronounced judgment against it." It has a bad appearance when to get rid of a doctrine, you must

get rid of one of the canonical books of the Bible. Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, who flourished in the first half of the fourth century, wrote a history of the church, and misrepresented the Millennial doctrine. As a historian, he is not trustworthy. He seems to have sacrificed principle to keep on good terms with Constantine, the emperor. According to professor Stuart, Dr. Elliot, and Mr. Brooks, he endeavoured to throw discredit on the authority of the Revelation; and Dr. Elliot affirms that his "untrustworthiness and tendencies to inaccuracies on any Millenary subject, are sufficiently apparent."

Speaking of those who opposed the Millennium in the fourth century, Mede says, "They denied the Apocalypse to be Scripture, nor was it re-admitted till they thought they had found some commodious interpretation of the thousand years."

Bishop Russell says, "It is worthy of remark, that so long as the prophecies regarding the Millennium were interpreted literally, the Apocalypse was received as an inspired production, and as the work of the apostle John; but no sooner did theologians find themselves compelled to view its annunciations through the medium of allegory and metaphorical description, than they ventured to call in question its heavenly origin, its genuineness, and its authority. Dionysius, the great supporter of the allegorical school, gives a decided opinion against the authenticity of the Revelation."

Gibbon tells us that "in the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 360, the Apocalypse was tacitly excluded from the sacred canon, by the same churches of Asia to which it was addressed; and we may learn from the complaint of Sul-

picius Severus, that then sentence had been ratified by the greater number of christians of his time." The Revelation taught the Millennium so plainly, that when they denied the Millennium, they also denied the Revelation.

Referring to the same significant fact, Dr. Cumming says, "Some divines of the fourth century rejected the Apocalypse, on the ground that it contained, as they alleged, prophecies of what they erroneously believed to be a carnal Millennium; just in the same way as some persons still argue that the Bible cannot be God's word, because it contains truths that cross their prejudices."

They could not say that the apostle John did not teach the doctrine of the Millennium : his teaching was too plain to be denied ; and therefore, those who rejected the doctrine, spoke against the book that taught it. But when through the allegorizing of Origen, they accepted the notion of a spiritual Millennium, then they became reconciled to the Apocalypse by putting upon it a spiritual meaning.

But there are some in these days who professedly admit the authority of the Revelation, and yet neglect its study, and seldom ever read it, and discard the doctrine of the Millennium because, as they say, it is only taught in one place, chapter xx., and so they spiritualize it and explain it away. But if it is taught there, and taught plainly, as we have clearly proved, is not that enough ? It is a generally received doctrine, that the Son of God shall deliver up the kingdom—the mediatorial kingdom—to the Father ; but we do not know of any place where it is taught except in 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

A very different view to the view we have been exposing

was entertained by John Wesley. In reference to the Apocalypse, he says, "It behoves every christian at all opportunities to read what is written in the Oracles of God, and to read this precious book in particular, frequently, reverently, and attentively; for the time of its beginning to be accomplished is near—even when St. John wrote. How much nearer to us is even the full accomplishment of this weighty prophecy."

No part of the Sacred Scriptures so much as the Revelation speaks of Satan's overthrow and doom and punishment; and doubtless for this reason as well as others, he will endeavour to keep christians from reading it, and especially from making it their study with a view to arrive at its true meaning. He knows that in as far as he can get this book neglected by the church, he will have gained a special advantage. He wants to keep christians in ignorance of his wiles and stratagems, of his deception and lies, and of his awful power to beguile and injure the souls of men, and hence he has got this book almost generally neglected. And he has brought about this neglect under the plea that christians cannot understand it, that it is too high for them to reach, that it is an evidence of pride and vanity for them to pry into such mysteries, and that there is enough that is plain and simple to occupy their minds; and deceived by these specious suggestions, they treat the Revelation with indifference, and pass it by, save that they pick out a few passages which, as they think, are easy of comprehension. They think this is a sign of humility and wisdom, little suspecting that they are acting under a delusion of the devil. God evidently foresaw how the study of the Revelation would be neg-

lected by His professing people, and therefore He cautions them against this neglect by pronouncing a blessing on those who keep the sayings of this prophecy.

The common view, then, of the Millennium now prevalent in Christendom, the spiritualizing of this doctrine, has come down from the ages after the church became allied with the world. Indeed, when Christianity first had the patronage of the state, under Constantine, christians thought the Millennium was at hand. The contrast between their condition then and their condition under previous rulers, who had been their bitter enemies and persecutors, was so great that they were thereby deceived. But by that unholy alliance Christianity soon became corrupted. The church and Christianity should have no alliance with the secular power; past history shows that the weakening of the one and the corruption of the other, are the natural result. Primitive and Scriptural views of the second coming of Christ gave place to erroneous doctrine. A system of spiritualizing commenced, and a spiritual Millennium was looked for before Christ's coming. In the church's darkest days, however, there were some who held to the true faith; but the Romish apostacy became widely spread, and this precious truth was almost hidden amid the general darkness. God be praised that for many years the darkness has been dispersing, and the light of this glorious truth has been spreading more and more.

XL.

THE VIEWS OF SEVERAL GREAT MEN OF LATER TIMES.

MILTON, who wrote "Paradise Lost," believed in the personal reign of Christ, and he quotes the following passages as proving that reign:—Psa. ii. 8, 9; cx. 5, 6; Isa. ix. 6, 7; Dan. vii. 22—27; Matt. xix. 28; Luke i. 32, 33; xxii. 29, 30; Rev. ii. 25—27.

Dr. Duffield says of Newton that "he gave his powerful mind two whole years to the study of the prophecies, and has avowed his belief in the Pre-millennial coming of Christ."

Augustus M. Toplady remarks, "I am one of those old-fashioned people who believe the doctrine of the Millennium and that there will be two distinct resurrections of the dead—first, of the just; and second, of the unjust, which last resurrection of the reprobate will not commence till a thousand years after the resurrection of the elect. In this glorious interval of a thousand years, Christ, I apprehend, will reign in person over the kingdom of the just."

William Romaine says, "The marks and signs of Christ's second advent are fulfilling daily. His coming cannot be far off. If you compare the uncommon events which the Lord said were to be the forerunners of His coming to judgment, with what hath lately happened in the world, you must conclude that the time is at hand."

Dr. Chalmers says, "Of this I am satisfied, that the next coming of Christ will be a coming, not to final judg-

ment, but a coming to usher in the Millennium. I utterly despair of the universal prevalence of Christianity as the result of the missionary process. I look for its conclusive establishment through a widening passage of desolations and judgments, with the demolition of our civil and ecclesiastical structures. Overturn, overturn, overturn, is the watchword of our approaching Lord."

Dr. John Gill, a learned commentator among the Baptists, says, "Christ will have a special, glorious, peculiar, and visible kingdom, in which He will reign personally on earth. This kingdom will be bounded by two resurrections—first, by the resurrection of the just, at which it will begin; and second, by the resurrection of the wicked, at which it will end."

"I believe," says Bishop Ryle, "that the world will never be completely converted to Christianity, by any existing agency, before the end comes. In spite of all that can be done by ministers, members, and churches, the wheat and the tares will grow together until the harvest; and when the end comes, it will find the earth in much the same state that it was when the flood came in the days of Noah."

The Lord's faithful witnesses are becoming more faithful, more fully consecrated, and more alive to the necessity of proclaiming the nearness of His second coming. Spiritual forces operating upon them are stronger, and by a hand unseen they are being led nearer to God. The world is receding in their eye; the things of time have less hold upon their attention; they are taken up more with the precious word of life and the things of the future kingdom.

Then on the other hand the enemies of the Lord are waxing more bold in their opposition, more bitter in their hatred of the truth, more unbelieving and infidel both in their head and heart. Is not this a fulfilling of Scripture? And is it not a sign of the approaching end?

The present is the season in which the Bridegroom is tarrying, but we are not therefore to slumber and sleep, as if His promise to come would never be fulfilled. If we do not keep in a watching, waiting, expecting attitude, He may come and find us not ready. "For yet a little while and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry." Great dignity will be conferred on those who cherish a watchful spirit, and are found watching when the Lord comes. See Luke xii. 31, 38.

XLI.

THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD BEFORE THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST A MODERN NOTION.

THE present prevailing idea, and which from its pleasing nature has taken such a hold on Christendom, that the world will be converted by the present agencies, and that there will be a spiritual reign of righteousness for a thousand years before the second coming of Christ, is utterly contrary to the entire scope of christian teaching on this subject. Christians often talk about taking the world for Christ. It is a grand idea if the thing could be done. We

often meet with that, or a similar expression, in human writings; we not unfrequently hear it from human lips. "This world," says R. W. Allen, "must be taken for Christ. The church must do it. She can do it. It is her mission on earth to do it." Bishop Janes says, "A holy church would soon make a holy world." Dr. Foster says, "Let christians claim their privileges, and come up to the standard, and the world will be a speedy and easy conquest." J. S. Inskip says, "The entire sanctification of the church means the salvation of the world. With a church baptized from above, and filled with the Holy Ghost, in a short time the world will be saved." The writer of the leading article in No. 7 of "The War Cry," says, "Before we have done, by the Holy Ghost, we will fill the world with trusting, loving children of the King." Another writer says, "The desideratum for the times is a holy church. This secured, the salvation of the world will soon follow." Another says, "I feel impressed that the time has just come when God is going to pour out His Spirit upon the nations of the earth. God will convert a nation in a day." Now this notion, apart from the second appearing of Jesus, is without foundation in Holy Scripture. To talk of the world's conversion as taking place a thousand years before that event, is one of the wildest dreams. It is one of the most delusive hopes. The Scriptures contain not a single passage to sanction such a hope. The world will never be taken for Christ till Christ comes and takes it for Himself. We are to make a universal proclamation of the gospel; we are to persuade all we can to accept it; we are in truth to be co-workers with God while He is taking out of the world a people for His name; and that is all we can do,

and all that God has promised to do in the present age.

It is true we read in Rev. xi. 15, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ;" and these words are often quoted by those who hold the common view, as setting forth the universal reign of righteousness, to be brought about by the preaching of the gospel; but the former part of this passage shows that this does not take place till the seventh angel shall sound, and Christ does not come till the sound of the seventh angel; and therefore there can be no universal reign prior to His coming. Matthew Mead believes that "Christ will visibly appear at the beginning of the seventh trumpet." Sir Isaac Newton says, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God shall be finished." And Joshua Spalding affirms, "We are plainly told, this glorious event shall take place under the sounding of the seventh trumpet. This none disputes. All agree that the expected reign of Christ upon earth will be in the days of the voice of the seventh trumpet."

The prophet Daniel says, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."—Dan. vii. 13, 14. Now there is no doubt that the prophet had his eye here on the Lord's second coming. The words in Rev. i. 7, "Behold, He cometh with the clouds," correspond very closely with one phrase in the above passage.

And who doubts that John was referring to the second advent? Yet this coming is previous to the establishment of the kingdom; it is subsequent to His appearing that the people of all nations, and languages, render service to Him. With his prophetic eye, under divine inspiration, the prophet looks through the ages and fixes the time of the setting up of this kingdom at the overthrow of the fourth monarchy, the Roman empire,—the overthrow of it, we mean, in its divided form, as broken up into separate kingdoms, for it no longer exists in its unity,—when the “little horn,” or the Antichrist, shall be put down. “In the days of these kings,” says he, “shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed.”—Dan. ii. 44. Now as this kingdom will be established at the close of the fourth monarchy, it cannot refer to a spiritual kingdom, for the spiritual kingdom has existed ever since Christ began to preach and gain disciples. It has already existed more than eighteen centuries; but the kingdom promised in the above passage is not yet set up, for the fourth monarchy, divided into several kingdoms, is yet existing, though we believe its days are now few. The parable of the nobleman illustrates this view, that the kingdom will not come till the Lord comes. “A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.”—Luke xix. 12. Now it is at the time that he returns that he receives the kingdom. He goes away in order to receive it, and when he receives it, he returns. So Christ went away to the Father, and at the day and the hour appointed, He will return with authority from the Father to take the kingdom.

The same great and precious truth is taught in Acts iii.

20, 21 : " And that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began." This passage implies and teaches several important things. 1. It implies that the state of things now is one that needs restoration. Things are in a state of disorder, disarrangement; and men are sick, are down with a spiritual malady. 2. It teaches that there shall be a restoration. Health shall take the place of disease; soundness shall take the place of rottenness; that which is down shall be lifted up; confusion shall be turned into order; darkness shall be turned into light; what is wrong shall be righted, and union and peace and happiness shall prevail. The Scriptures are numerous which portray this glorious period. 3. The term, the "restoration of all things," and the term in the verse preceding, the "seasons of refreshing," evidently refer to the same state of things. And there can be no reasonable doubt that the Millennium is the blessed state referred to. 4. But this state is to begin with the coming of Christ. It is promised that God shall send the Christ, even Jesus. He will send Him to bring about that state of things. Until those times the Heaven must receive Him. This plainly implies that when the period arrives for the restoration, or restitution, to be made, the heaven will give Him up, and God will send Him down. 5. This restoration God has promised, and His holy prophets have foretold it. But we would digress here for a moment to offer one remark. Believers, in the strict sense of the word, will not be *subjects* of the future restoration, though

their bodies will be raised and restored to them in a spiritual and glorified state; they will be employed with Christ in the wonderful work of ruling, and of restoring to humanity what has been lost. Our redemption and crowning and privilege and blessing come to us at the coming of Christ: restoration and regeneration for Israel and the nations come to them when we, the body of Christ, with Him, the Head, take the rule of the world. 6. If this exposition of this passage is correct,—and we feel sure it cannot be proved to be incorrect,—then the theory is false that teaches that the restitution of all things, or the Millennium, will take place before Christ is sent.

A very strong argument on this point may be based on Paul's words to the Thessalonians. "Now we beseech you, brethren, touching the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto Him; to the end that ye be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be troubled, either by spirit, or by word, or by epistle as from us, as that the day of the Lord is now present; let no man beguile you, in any wise: for it will not be, *except the falling away come first*, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."—2 Thess. ii. 1—3. The force of this passage and our argument upon it, would not be seen by the common translation; and as that translation will still be largely used, and many may have got a wrong view of the apostle's meaning fixed in their minds, a remark or two may help to clear away the misunderstanding. For the correct reading, as given in the revised version, "the day of the Lord is now present," we have in the common translation, "the day of Christ is at hand," which has caused a misconception of the true meaning of the passage. "The

word here used," says a critical scholar, "is invariably applied to denote *something already extant*. And this being predicated of "THE DAY OF THE LORD," that crisis, which is uniformly associated in Scripture, with the letting loose of the Divine judgments on the earth, no wonder that the allegation should have troubled the Thessalonians, who had been assured on the contrary . . . that they would be caught up to Jesus *previously*." The apostle in his first epistle to this people had spoken to them of Christ's coming. Some of them were disturbed and perplexed on this subject. From the 3rd verse it would seem as if some had misrepresented the matter, and sought to deceive them by speaking of the day of Christ as present, or already come, and begetting in their minds a slavish fear or dread of that day. Paul endeavours to correct this false impression and administer comfort to them. He assures them that previous to that day, there shall be the falling away, and the revelation of the man of sin. The argument, therefore, we base on these words is this: if the apostacy is to precede that day, it cannot be preceded by a thousand years of righteousness, as is commonly taught; and hence the falsehood of that teaching.

Christianity in this dispensation will not secure the salvation of all. The multitude from the first have rejected it, and the multitude will continue to reject it. Nevertheless it is saving many; it is winning many to be the people of God, the followers and imitators of Christ; it is preparing many for the kingdom, and will ere long bring them to glory.

The notion that the world is going to be converted by the preaching of the gospel, is comparatively a modern notion.

It is not the view that prevailed in earlier times. The opposite view prevailed for several centuries. The early disciples who listened to apostolic teaching, and generations following who listened to the teaching of those disciples, held a very different view to that which is now commonly held. The view now generally held was condemned by the church as heresy till within about two centuries since. That cannot be true now in these latter days which was false in the early days of Christianity. The lapse of ages cannot change falsehood into truth. What was false then is false now; what was truth then is truth now, whatever men may say to the contrary. After the proclamation of the gospel for nearly nineteen hundred years, we cannot point to a single city, or town, or village where all have embraced the truth.

According to the will of God, as made known in the word, the gospel is to be preached to save men, to gather into one body—the Church—all who believe, to gather together a people for the Lord; and it is to be proclaimed to all, to give all the opportunity of being saved who will accept salvation; but there is no Scripture which teaches that all will embrace it. On the contrary, Scripture plainly teaches that many will not receive it, will not believe, will not come to Christ that they might be saved.

This notion that the gospel will spread and be universally accepted, and that Christ will reign spiritually in the hearts of all men for a thousand years, was not taught in the church until it was originated by Dr. Daniel Whitby, a man of acknowledged great learning. A thousand years spiritual Millennium before the coming of Christ is spoken of by himself as a “new hypothesis” at the beginning of

the eighteenth century. Various historians and writers agree to the truth of this statement. Bishop Henshaw says, "The fact is that the commonly received opinion of a spiritual Millennium, consisting in a universal triumph of the gospel and conversion of all nations for a thousand years before the coming of Christ, is a novel doctrine, unknown to the church for the space of sixteen hundred years. So far as we have been able to investigate its history, it was first advanced by the Rev. Dr. Whitby, the commentator, and afterwards advocated by Hammond, Hopkins, Scott, Dwight, Bougue, and others, and has been received without careful examination by the majority of evangelical divines in the present day." Now how can that be a christian doctrine which was unknown in the church for sixteen hundred years; or more correctly, for nearly seventeen hundred years?

XLII.

NO INDICATION IN THE TENDENCIES OF THE TIMES THAT
THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF MEANS WILL BRING ABOUT
THE WORLD'S CONVERSION.

It will be instructive and profitable for us to inquire by what means the Millennium will be brought about. Now the popular belief is that it will take place before the appearing of Jesus Christ, and that it will be brought about by the preaching of the Gospel, and the extended use of the means now in operation, with the blessing of

God upon them. This is the common doctrine. And those who believe this,—those who believe that His reign on earth will simply be a spiritual reign, do not believe that He will come again till the close of the Millennium, when He comes at the last judgment. But the belief that Christ's coming would be prior to His thousand years' reign,—that His appearing, indeed, would introduce the Millennium,—was, as we have seen, the belief of the christian church in the early ages. It was the belief of those christians who lived in the ages next to that of the apostles, and who were likely to know the true sense of their teaching. It was not until the reign of Constantine, and men had begun to corrupt the pure gospel, that an opposite view prevailed.

But looking forward to the Millennium from the orthodox point of view, what hope is there of its approach? What rational or Scriptural ground have we for our faith? What reasons have we to look for the world's conversion by the means at present in operation? Even if we should again witness great revivals—as we have done in the past, and which I pray we may—is there any hope that the church's increase will keep pace with the world's increase? Facts show the contrary. And if there is no hope of the church increasing as fast as the world, how is the church to overtake the world? Nay, how is the church to swallow up the world, to get all the world within her pale or enclosure? Think what a vast disproportion there is between the numbers of the unsaved and the numbers of the saved. The difference in numbers is too great to be properly realized. The inhabitants of the world are supposed to number 1,437,000,000. It is calculated that there are now

700,000,000 who have never listened to the gospel of the kingdom. The number of heathen is supposed to be 500,000,000, or 600,000,000. About 300,000,000 are supposed to profess christianity. But of these there may not be more than 30,000,000 who are real christians. What a small proportion to the inhabitants of the entire globe! Men may preach about earth's millions being speedily converted, as some do; they may set forth this theory in missionary sermons and missionary speeches. In glowing and eloquent language they may describe how heathenism will be given up, how false religions will be laid aside, how crime and wickedness will cease, and christianity spread and prevail and triumph until all the unnumbered millions of the globe shall be saved. But all such talk is without any Scripture foundation when we look for thesee things, or any state of things approaching this, previous to the coming of Jesus.

It is necessary here to make an inquiry into the tendencies of the times, and ascertain whether there is any thing in those tendencies which indicates the universal spread of religion, and the approach of the Millennial blessedness. Let us look at things honesty and impartially; let us view them as they really exist around us, and see if there is anything in them which affords proof that sin, and crime, and misery are diminishing, and that we may soon look for crime to cease, and our prisons to be empty, and good order and religion and happiness every where to prevail.

One of the tendencies of the present times is the general and almost insatiable thirst for light reading, and in no small degree for sceptical reading: and the more corrupt

and debasing it is, the greater is the thirst for it on the part of the multitude. Many of the popular novels are written by men destitute of christian principle; and hence piety is often ridiculed and vice extolled. It is their study, not to improve the taste of their readers, but to gratify it. It is not what will benefit mankind,—what will lead them to goodness and benevolence, but what will sell and make gain. And it is a fact, as lamentable as it is true, that the more a book will excite the human passions, and tickle the fancy, and wake up the curiosity, and lead the imagination to revel in scenes of unlawful gratification, the more eagerly it will be bought and read. The great sale of such books over books of a pure and an elevating character, is almost astonishing. Look over any of the bookstalls at our railway stations, and you will see at once the kind of literature which sells best. The books of real value are few compared with those which are worthless. Those are kept in the greatest variety and numbers which command the greatest sale.

Is there any evidence that this taste for novel reading and other corrupt literature is declining? Is it not, indeed, on the increase? Was there ever a period, in the history of the past, when such books and publications were more generally called for? Are there any signs of religious magazines and periodicals supplanting those that are irreligious? Are there any signs of good and wholesome reading driving bad and unwholesome reading out of the market? You know there are none. You know the tendency for novel reading is increasing. You know too that the churches, fully aware of this, are pandering to that taste. Hence there is hardly a religious

magazine or periodical published but what has some tale, or fiction, running through it, though it is but just to say that the moral of such is of a higher character; still it is a step in the wrong direction. Hence some of the large religious book concerns are sending out pernicious and ruinous publications.

That we have not overstated this thing we could, if we had space, furnish abundant evidence. In "Zion's Herald" for Jan. 22nd, 1880, bishop Jesse T. Peck, in the leading article, speaking of Methodism as it was and as it is, and of the great change that has taken place in the reading of the American Methodist, says, "It is humiliating to confess that the old substantial works of our great Methodist authors have slowly disappeared from the growing splendid libraries of our people. Ask any of the younger classes, and even of the older, what did Wesley and Fletcher and Watson teach as the doctrines of the Bible, and the answer may be a blush of mortification, but it is very likely to be, 'We never have read those works. We haven't got them in our library.' Ask them about Darwin and Huxley and Tyndall and the latest novels, and they will talk about them with enthusiasm by the hour. The alarming truth is, our people are largely getting their theology, or more correctly their ologies, without God, from a diluted liberal, skeptical literature."

In the same number of "Zion's Herald," another writer makes these remarks:—"Indifference to religious truth and knowledge is too prevalent. In many families of professing christians, there is very little, if any, religious reading; works of fiction and the superficial secular press occupy its place."

Another writer in the same paper, but in a previous number, declares "the children are being led away from the foundations of religious culture and useful lives by the light, frothy, impure literature and practices of the present class of nominal Christians." Now is there any thing in this tendency of the age to justify the hope that the present system of religious means will soon usher in the Millennial age? You know this tendency is growing and spreading and strengthening in spite of the means that some are using to check it.

Again; not a few of the popular lectures that are delivered, while they do not treat, professedly, of Christianity, nevertheless advance principles which are intended to undermine the foundations of Christianity. This is another bad tendency of the present age. The inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures are ignored; human reason is elevated more than the divine word; and the New Testament doctrine of atonement or redemption is treated as a mere dogma, as an irrational theory, and is sneered at.

Have we any indications in the present progress of the truth, that this state of things will soon cease? Are not such lectures multiplying? Are not fresh names, amongst scientific men, being added to the list of those who give such lectures? And are not some of those names, names of persons who have been previously on the christian side? This tendency of our times, therefore, furnishes no signs that the church's agencies and instrumentalities will bring about the Millennium. This tendency operates in the opposite direction. It is a sign that the apostacy is spreading, but it is not a sign that the Millennium is coming by our present means.

Another tendency of the present day is the mad chase after pleasure. What crowds are brought together by popular amusements, especially in our large cities and towns. And how sad that so many professors of religion will mix up with those seekers of pleasure. Theatres are far better attended than churches and chapels. Even professors will attend a concert, or a church fair, in far greater numbers than they attend the prayer meeting. A shower of rain would keep many from a revival meeting, but not from an evening entertainment. Then the facilities afforded in our time, by cheap railway excursions, for sight seeing and indulging in unlawful pleasures, help to beguile numbers into this sin. And they will visit places, and unite with company, and witness sights, and take part in games inconsistent with the christian character. Dr. Joseph T. Duryea, of Boston, lately said in a speech, referring to the unrest of society almost everywhere, "One of the most significant signs of this universal weariness was the rush for light amusements. When one had a mighty joy in his heart, he didn't need to hire actors and harlequins to make merriment for him. People were rushing for 'Pinafore' not because they were glad, but because they were sad."

Now have we any indications that this tendency of the age is diminishing? There are none. There may, indeed, be a few instances,—and they are cause for great joy,—where in consequence of special efforts to promote the revival of religion, or a quickened piety amongst christians, popular amusements have been less attended by professors; but taking society as a whole, we believe there is no improvement in this respect. As far as our own observation

extends, we are quite sure this thing is growing worse. There are no signs that the mind of the great multitude is being turned from worldly pleasure to religion. What shall we say then of this tendency of our age? So far from containing any thing favourable to the idea of the world's speedy conversion, by the present means, it contains much against it. There is no hope at present of even the dawn of the Millennium being brought about by the means now employed by the church.

Another tendency of this age, and for which the church is responsible, is the multiplication of outward forms and observances. This tendency is exceedingly prevalent, especially in some of the sects. The excessive ritualism of the Romish Church is well known, and it is almost equally well known that the English Church is treading in her steps. There is hardly a week but there is some fresh manifestation of this tendency. Though vigorous and wide spread efforts are made to check it, the evil grows and extends.

"The history of the church," says Dr. L. R. Dunn, "clearly demonstrates the fact, that, as spiritual vitality and power have declined, there has been an effort to substitute for them external forms and multiplied machinery. And generally, where there has been the least of these spiritual elements, there has been the greatest amount of the material. And just now in the church the same absurd tendencies are developing themselves. There is almost a mania for building costly churches, and for the multiplication of machinery in the Sunday school and in the church . . . Faith in God is the bond of connection and union with the source of power, and in proportion

as this is weak or strong, will be the efficiency or weakness of the Church. Excessive ritualism is the legitimate out-growth of a Church that is dying at the heart ; or, perhaps more correctly, it is a fungus indicating the corruption and impurity of its life-blood. The normal, external condition of the church is the utmost simplicity of means and machinery, and its normal state is the power of the Holy Ghost moving them with resistless energy and efficiency."

Now in this prevailing tendency of our times is there any sign of the rapid spread of religion, of the world-wide diffusion of Christian truth and Christian holiness by the means that are now employed ? It is exactly the reverse. This tendency is a sign of decay ; it is a sign that real religion, that the life of God in the soul, is waning.

It will have been observed by those whose eyes are open, that a further tendency of this age is, the growing love of sensational preaching. Now when people seek excitement rather than instruction, and pleasure rather than profit, under the preaching of the Gospel, it is a bad sign, and does not favour the view that all men will speedily embrace the Gospel. Preaching of that kind produces little or no quickening of the moral sense, but brings the mind into a state that is unfavourable to holy living. The appetite for dramatic preaching increases ; entertainment is more thought of than spirituality ; and preaching that is on the deep things of God, or earnest preaching to lead the church to a higher plane of piety, ceases to attract, except a few. It does not draw world-loving professors. It is thought to be behind the times, to be only suitable for the days gone by, and not advanced enough for this enlightened age. No tendency of the present age needs to be depre-

cated more than this. There is a sacrifice of that which is of the greatest importance in order to feed and cherish an unhealthy, morbid mental state. And in this tendency, as in those already noticed, there is nothing to favour the idea that the world will be soon taken for Jesus by the usual methods of preaching, and praying, and labouring.

The rapid spread of great monster systems of error under the name of religion, is another tendency of the age in which we live. There is something very significant in the spread—the truly marvellous spread—of Mormonism and Spiritualism. Vast multitudes have been beguiled into these delusions both in this country and in America ; and amongst the dupes of the latter are many, not only from the lower, but the higher ranks of society ; many who are well educated and move in respectable circles, and not a few who have professed religion. Perhaps there is no delusion which has spread so widely in so short a time. And there is none which is more likely to spread amongst that class of persons, which is very numerous, who have not a firm faith in Holy Scripture, but are the subjects of doubts and fears in relation to the great hereafter, and have a strong desire to gratify their natural curiosity with regard to future things that are not revealed.

That these and other erroneous systems cannot stand during the Millennium, all true believers will readily acknowledge ; but have we any evidence that they are likely to fall by the power of the means at present in operation? Are they, on the whole, giving way, and tottering, and losing their hold on the minds of men ? Is the fatal error of spiritualism giving place to gospel truth ? Is the awful darkness being scattered by the light of Christianity ? Do

we see signs that those who have been imposed upon by this religious quackery, this abominable cheat, are coming over to the side of truth? We caution you here not to misunderstand us. We believe that in proportion as error is faithfully exposed, and truth is faithfully and earnestly preached, if we can only get men to listen, will error wane and truth triumph; we believe that most firmly; and the exposure of error and the proclamation of truth have already won millions to the cause of truth. But are we as christians gaining ground on those who are propagating error? Is truth on the whole spreading more rapidly than error? Are we gaining disciples for Christ faster than the world is gaining disciples for Satan? Is the church increasing more than the world? That is the light in which to view this subject. We are compelled to withhold an affirmative answer to these questions. No matter how sad, or how humiliating the thought may be, we are compelled to acknowledge that the population of the world is increasing much faster than the members of Christ's church. What are the additions, year by year, of a few thousands to the church compared with the addition of hundreds of thousands to our population? In the present state of things, and on the common theory, what indications have we of a coming Millennium? As men and women multiply on the earth, and error and crime and misery increase, do we not, according to the views of the Millennium generally prevalent, seem farther from it as the world grows older?

A Bible Christian minister, preaching on the text, "Thy kingdom come," and believing simply in a spiritual kingdom, and looking for the conversion of the world by the

preaching of the Gospel, yet saddened at the thought of the slow progress of the gospel, observes, "It is one of our greatest sources of regret and sorrow that we do not see the kingdom of Christ extend in our midst as we could wish. After all our preaching and giving, we fear that in soul-saving we are not gaining sufficiently upon the increasing population. It is stated that considering the larger number of human beings upon the globe, there are no more Christians now then there were in the first century. Our hearts are sad when we look at a year's labours and a year's fruits. Brethren, there are defects somewhere."

The results of the preaching of Christianity for more than eighteen hundred years, are not such as to justify the belief that the world will ever be won for Christ by the agency of the church. It is true the church by its various agencies, age after age, has gathered into the fold vast multitudes from the world; but the agencies of the evil one, age after age, have been as numerous; and worldliness, and apostacy, and infidelity are at this hour more widely spread than ever. The increase of christians is by no means equal to the increase of the population of the race. And we are not alone in this opinion. Some of the most observant minds share in this view. In the *New York Independent* there is an article by the Rev. Newman Hall on Revivals. A quotation from it appears in the *Christian World* of April 21st, 1881, in which he says, "In the need of a revival we are agreed. Throughout this country, in all denominations, there is the sorrowful admission that the progress of the church does not keep pace with that of the population. There is a diminished attend-

ance at public worship ; there are fewer admissions to christian fellowship on personal profession."

And the promises which are usually quoted, upon which is based the theory of the world's conversion by the preaching of the Gospel, do not refer to the present dispensation, but to the ages of blessedness which will follow the appearing of Jesus, and the setting up of His kingdom.

We fail to see any indications, in the present progress of religion, that the morning of the Millennium has commenced, or is near its commencement. The present condition of the church and the world, and their respective tendencies during the last few years, cannot be satisfactorily accounted for on the principle that the nations of the earth are to be converted by the agencies and instrumentalities now in operation. We have grounds for believing that the tendencies of the age we have mentioned are gradually gathering strength, and that things are growing worse instead of better. And we have reason to fear, from the predictions of the New Testament, that other false teachers will yet appear, that other systems of error will yet be propounded ; that many more will yet be deceived and led to embrace unsound or defective doctrine ; and that even lying wonders will be wrought that will stagger the faith even of many christians.

Some who are not willing to admit that the world is growing worse, may point to the advancement which of late years has been made in science, and education, and general knowledge. But progress in these things, while it is an unspeakable blessing, is not progress in godliness, piety, holiness, or entire devotedness to Christ. Men sin now against greater light than they did in former years ;

they abuse greater privileges; they let go unimproved greater opportunities; and therefore, their sin is greater and their guilt deeper.

XLIII.

INDICATIONS THAT THE MILLENNIUM IS AT HAND.

We believe, however, that there *are* indications,—indications that cannot be well mistaken by those who adhere to the divine word and not to a human creed,—that the dawn of the Millennial day is very near; but the reasons of our belief are exactly contrary to the reasons of those who hold the common view. Those who maintain the common view fancy they see signs of the approach of the Millennium in the spread of the truth, in the revivals of religion which now and then take place, and in the numerous conversions which we are happily favoured occasionally to witness. We think we see signs of its near approach in the rising up of so many false teachers, in the wide diffusion of heresy or false doctrine, in the large substitution of form and ritual for the simplicity and power of Christianity, in the adoption of human philosophy for divine teaching, in the fearful prevalence of apostacy, and vice, and the desire for sensual pleasure, and the increase of worldly and priestly power in opposition to christian truth and christian holiness. That the former things are signals that the Millennium is approaching, we have no Scriptural proof;

but that the latter are signals of the nearness of that day, we have evidence in abundance in the Sacred Scriptures.

In the latter days, if we understand the word, infidelity is to prevail very widely. Even the Church of Rome itself, it is thought, will become at the last, an infidel power. Rome is doubtless the mother of harlots, of those who forsake the true God and follow after false gods ; but are the harlots, her daughters, confined to Rome ? Are they not to be found amongst the professing christians of Protestant sects ? This spirit of infidelity is rapidly spreading. Thousands of those who have been nursed and brought up by Rome on the continent, have become unbelievers. In Germany there is "not only a wide-spread indifference, but a positive dislike, if not hatred, towards the Christian Church and Religion." A short time ago, Dr. Hitchcock, who was labouring in Paris, in the cause of Protestantism, stated that there was a society of atheists there claiming a membership of 15,000. And he affirms that their influence is not simply negative, but that they make aggressive war upon the churches. And if there is such a large number in Paris alone, how great must be the number in the whole of France.

The wide-spread unbelief of this age, and the awful ravages of sin, show that the night of darkness will soon give place to the dawn of day. In their teaching, the various writers of Scripture are one in representing the end of the present dispensation as one of apostacy. Among professors there will be much formalism and hypocrisy ; and among the ungodly there will be much scepticism, infidelity, atheism, and immorality. These things we see spreading around us. From Luke xvii. 26—30, it appears that when

Christ comes, men will be eating and drinking as in the days of Lot, caring only for the things of this life.

The Millennium, you will observe, is connected with the second coming of Christ, or rather, is subsequent to His second coming, and the result of it; and Christ is not to come again till there has been this fearful apostacy and the man of sin has been revealed. We have, then, no Scriptural hope of the world's regeneration till the appearing of Jesus. When He comes, He will put down all His enemies; He will subdue the powers of evil and put the devil in chains; He will take the kingdom of the world and bring men to submit to His authority. Satan and his allies are now stirring themselves up and opposing the Redeemer and His cause; but soon the absent Saviour will appear and exert His almighty power against His enemies. He will not long keep silence; He *will* come, and He will speak in words of consolation to His friends, but in words of thunder to His enemies.

XLIV.

THE MANNER IN WHICH THE MILLENNIUM WILL BE INTRODUCED.

Now but for divine revelation we should have no knowledge of the future world-wide reign of Christ; to that Revelation then we must look for a knowledge of the way that that reign will be brought about. The following verses indicate the way in which the reign of Christ will be introduced:—"And there shall come forth a rod out of the

stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord: and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins."—Isa. xi. 1—5. It will be seen from this that the wicked are to be slain, by which term we understand the open enemies of the King. It is not by the publishing of the gospel and the silent diffusion of the truth, that the nations are to be turned into the paths of righteousness, but by the awful judgments of Heaven. We know this may sound strange to some ears, but that is because they have not attended to the positive and solemn declarations of Scripture. In referring to that day, the prophet puts into the mouth of the Lord's people these words: "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of Thee. With my soul have I desired Thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early: *for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.*"—Isa. xxvi. 8, 9.

Isaiah, looking into the distant future; and seeing with his prophetic eye, the wide-spread wickedness and corruption of the people, greatly laments over their moral con-

dition in the following language:—" For our transgressions are multiplied before Thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them; in transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the Lord saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment."—Chap. lix. 12—15. But how will this wickedness be overturned? What is to bring about a different state of things? How is that new moral state to be introduced? Is it to be introduced by the means now in operation, or by judgments? We answer, by the latter. After describing the condition of Israel, the prophet represents Jehovah as interposing in order to bring in a better state of things. " And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him: and His righteousness, it sustained Him. For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke. According to their deeds, accordingly He will repay, fury to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies; to the islands He will repay recompense. *So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun.* When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the

Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.”—Verses 16—20. The general spread of the fear of Jehovah’s name, and the extension of His glory, will follow these terrible judgments. Thus will the Millennium be introduced.

The prophet Zephaniah, prophesying of the blessedness of the Millennial period, is in perfect accord with Isaiah as to the way in which it will be introduced. He teaches that it will be introduced, not by the proclamation of the Gospel tidings, but by the desolating judgments of the Almighty. After referring to the wickedness and corruption of Jerusalem, the prophet represents Jehovah as saying, “Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”—Chap. iii. 8. And after Jehovah has thus interposed in anger, and brought upon the rebellious—the incorrigibly rebellious—destructive judgments, the prophet represents Him as saying, “For then” (observe this phrase, which refers to a definite time, when divine judgments shall be poured out.) “For THEN will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering. . . The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid.”—Verses 9, 10, 13.

We also learn from Luke xix. 27, that when Christ returns with His kingdom, He will say, "Howbeit these mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." And in Matt. xiii. 41, it is said, "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity." "It is *not* said that He will gather *out of the earth* all that offend," observes B. W. Newton, "for that would not be true, inasmuch as many of the unconverted Jews and Heathen will be spared and converted. Neither is the earth regarded as *having been* His kingdom, though it is *about to become* such."

The closing of the present dispensation and the inauguration of the Millennial dispensation may not be a sudden transaction, but, according to our calculation of time, may occupy months or years. Judging from other great events that have transpired, from other marked and wonderful changes in the past history of the world, we should conclude that a considerable period will be taken up in this momentous change.

XLV.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

WHILE the precise day and hour of the Lord's coming is yet hidden in the Divine counsels, we are not kept in utter darkness. If we are faithful watchers for the coming Deliverer, we may know, from the signs He Himself has

told us shall take place, when His coming is drawing near. The apostle Paul says, "But ye, brethren, *are not* in darkness, that that day should overtake *you* as a thief."—1 Thess. v. 4. This implies that christians have light respecting that day, and that they are acquainted with the signs which shall precede it, and the events which shall usher it in; so that when it comes it will not come as a day unlooked for, or unprepared for. But those who refuse to give attention to the subject will be in the dark respecting it, and to them the day will come as a thief.

In preaching Christ's second coming, we must not be surprised if some are indifferent, and others scoff and frown. Christ foretold that as there was general unconcern in the days of Noah before the flood came upon the earth, so there will be general unconcern prior to His second advent. And the apostle Peter says "that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."—2 Pet. iii. 3, 4. But those who deride and scoff till Jesus comes, and those who treat the subject with neglect, will find out their mistake too late.

Some seem to be afraid that a general belief in the soon coming of Christ, would create a dislike for business, disorganize commercial arrangements, and paralyze industry. This fear is groundless. There are now hundreds of thousands who do believe in the nearness of the advent, yet they still attend to their earthly duties; and they attend to their duties—all their duties—with more diligence, *because* they believe in the nearness of the Lord's

coming ; for it is their great concern to do all the Master's will and be found faithful in all things when they are summoned to meet Him.

Excepting believers in the nearness of the advent, who know not whether Christ may come while they are yet alive, all men believe that they must die, and none know how soon they may die. But does the general belief of men that they will die, put a stop to their devising plans for transacting business and winning money ? Every one knows the correct answer to this question.

But things will not continue always as they now do. There will be a check to mad speculation, and the reckless, all-absorbing rush of business. There will be a stop to the giddy whirl of pleasure. If there is not, how can Scripture be fulfilled ?

It has been alleged that those who are looking for the speedy coming of Christ to set up His kingdom, do little for the conversion of sinners. Believing that faith will diminish, and that things will get worse and worse till Jesus comes, it is alleged that they settle down into a quiet waiting for Him, without labouring to gather into the church souls from the world. That this is true of some we verily believe ; but it is equally true also of some who believe that the world will be converted before Christ comes. It is not the tendency of this doctrine to beget a spirit of idleness. Its tendency is to inspire diligence. When fully believed and realized, it tends to double the diligence of the believer in winning souls. If the master of a house has been a long while absent, and the servant believes his return is near, and may take place any hour, will not that increase the servant's diligence in getting

things in readiness for his return? And if christians believe that the time is approaching when Jesus, their Master, will return to this earth, and that the hour of his coming is unknown, will not that belief quicken them to renewed activity in preparing for the great event? Will it not tend to promote deadness to the world, and new life and zeal in the cause of God? Believers in the second advent, instead of having their efforts thereby paralyzed, experience a stirring up, an awakening to renewed consecration and diligence. It ought, indeed, ever to act as a powerful motive to entire dedication to Christ, and the employment of all our powers in His cause.

It has been stated further that we regard the Gospel as insufficient for the world's conversion. In the "*National Repository*" for February, 1879, speaking of the provisions of the Gospel, the writer says, "The Millennial idea denies the sufficiency of these provisions, and proclaims the failure of the Gospel in all the past, and its insufficiency for the work of saving the world . . . The Millennial theory depreciates the system of agencies ordained by our Lord . . . as of very little value." Statements more false than these Satan himself could scarcely invent or utter. We believe the Gospel has never failed in the past, and will never fail in the future. We believe the Gospel has already saved unnumbered millions of the human family, and we believe that millions more will yet prove it to be the power of God to their salvation. We believe that there never has been and that there never will be an instance of failure where the Gospel is truly and fully believed. The Gospel has only failed, in the same sense that medicine fails to cure a sick man when he refuses to

take it. It has only failed, in the same sense that bread fails to satisfy and strengthen a hungry man when he will not eat it. We believe in the sufficiency of the gospel provisions. We believe that those provisions are sufficient for the whole world. We believe that all who perish after having heard the gospel, will perish, not through any lack of sufficiency in the provisions, but because they will not believe and accept them. The Millennial theory also recognises the great value of the system of agencies ordained by our Lord. We contend that that theory, or belief, regards that system of agencies as the wisest and best. And we believe it is the only proper system of agencies for the present dispensation. We use that system. We employ its agencies. We believe in preaching the gospel at home and abroad. We believe in publishing the glad news around the world. We believe in meetings for prayer and testimony. We believe in secret prayer, in praying one for another, and in making prayers and intercessions for all men. We believe both in ordinary and extraordinary efforts for the promotion of holiness and for the conversion of sinners. We believe in publishing the gospel by means of books and tracts and periodicals. And we believe in using these means faithfully and constantly until the Lord shall come, and thus gathering all we can out of the world into the church. To say then that we deprecate these agencies and means as of very little value, is to utter an awful untruth.

Reader, rest not without the sweet assurance that you are ready any hour to meet the Lord Jesus. If you are not ready, you run an awful risk by deferring your preparation. The trumpet will sound in an hour you think

not of. The pious dead will be raised in an hour when the living are not looking for such an event. And the living saints will be transplanted when many in the professing church will be left behind, who are little more than christians in name, and who are not prepared for the Saviour's coming. Watch against formality, coldness, deadness ; take care that your heart is full of affection for Christ ; be sure that your evidences of His favour are clear and that your prospects for the great future are not only bright, but becoming brighter and brighter. Many errors that we commit we may rectify ; but if we commit the sad error of not being ready to meet Jesus when He comes, that is an error that cannot be rectified.





